



# 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 Volume IV, Issue 23

### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### 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

Marking 30 years of India-Israel relations, the two countries adopted a “vision statement” further deepening bilateral defence cooperation. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh in a meeting with Israeli Defence Minister, Benny Gantz stressed on “expanding defence cooperation including joint research, development, and production”. Meanwhile, Iran’s Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, is scheduled to visit India next week. In another development, during the visit of Pakistani Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif to Turkey, both countries agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation with a “strategic perspective”.

To protest derogatory remarks by spokespersons of an Indian political party against ‘Prophet Muhammad’, Qatar and Kuwait summoned Indian Ambassadors. India clarified that the comments on the Prophet “do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India”, adding that, “these are the views of fringe elements”. Saudi Arabia, while condemning the blasphemous comments welcomed the decision to suspend the concerned spokespersons from Party membership.

Amidst this, Indian Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu, met the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Thani in Doha. Vice President Naidu “appreciated Qatar’s investments in India which have grown five times since 2020, while calling upon Doha to further increase its investments that are still well below potential”. Meanwhile, Saudi investor ‘Abdul Latif Jameel’ is reportedly investing USD 220 million in Indian Electric Vehicle firm Greaves Electric Mobility.

As the Vienna talks on Iran’s nuclear program remain stalled, European Union’s Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell, stressed that “the possibility of restoring JCPoA was shrinking”. Further, the United States and E3 (UK, France, Germany) are seeking to censure Iran at IAEA through a resolution urging Tehran to fully cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog. Reportedly, it will be the first motion censuring Iran since June 2020. Iranian Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, on his part, warned that the US and European push for an IAEA resolution would disrupt the revival of JCPoA talks.

President Biden is likely to travel to the Middle East in July 2022, where reportedly he will visit Israel and Saudi Arabia for a GCC+3 summit. On the energy front,

ahead of President Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia, OPEC+ has agreed to hike crude output by 648,000 barrels a day in July and August 2022, offsetting Russian output losses. However, owing to China's emergence from COVID-19 lockdowns, crude prices continue to hover around USD 120/barrel.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Faisal bin Farhan, in his remarks at the 152<sup>nd</sup> session of the GCC Ministerial Council, highlighted Gulf countries' "unified stance" on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and underscored its negative consequences on the global and regional food security. Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, who attended the meeting, maintained that "GCC countries understand the nature of the conflict between Moscow and the West", and therefore the group will not join sanctions against Russia. Sergey Lavrov also reiterated calls for Syria's return to the Arab League.

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

## Bahrain

### [Ukraine, West Must Act to Resolve Food Crisis: Russia's Sergei Lavrov](#)

May 31, 2022, The Hindu

Western countries "created a lot of artificial problems by closing their ports to Russian ships, disrupting logistics and financial chains", Sergei Lavrov said during a visit to Bahrain.

### [Russia, Bahrain Share Common Views on Political Settlement of Syria Conflict: FM Lavrov](#)

June 01, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani in Manama, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov highlighted that the two countries maintain identical stances for the settlement of the Syrian crisis through political approaches.

## Egypt

### [Egypt in Talks with India on Wheat-For-Goods Swap Deal to Fight Shortage: Minister](#)

June 05, 2022, Arab News

Egypt is in discussions to import wheat from India in a deal that may include the export of products such as fertilisers in return.

### [New Garment Companies Turn to India as Lockdowns Hit China Output](#)

June 02, 2022, The Economic Times

New garment buyers from the Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Mexico, Spain, Turkey, Panama and South Africa among others have started negotiating with Indian companies to replace purchases from China.

### [EU, Egypt Near Gas Supply Deal in Shift Away from Russia](#)

June 03, 2022, AL Arabiya

The European Union and Egypt are set to sign a deal later this month on supplying the bloc with gas as EU seeks to slash its dependence on Russian supplies, according to a draft document.

### [Russia Aims to Conclude Free Trade Agreement with Egypt](#)

May 27, 2022, Egypt Independent

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that negotiations are actively underway to conclude a full free trade agreement with Iran, adding that similar negotiations are planned with Egypt, Indonesia and the UAE.

## Iraq

### [Iraq's Kurdistan Rejects Federal Ruling Over Oil Delivery to Baghdad Amid Dealings with Israel](#)

June 05, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

The judicial council of Iraq's Kurdistan has vehemently opposed a ruling from the Iraqi federal court to hand over the region's crude supplies to the central government in Baghdad amid secret dealings with Israel.

### [A New Threat in Iraq to Peace in the Middle East](#)

June 05, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

The Abraham Accords, established in 2020, have created economic and diplomatic benefits for the four countries that agreed to normalise relations with the Jewish state. But an opposing coalition has effectively formed out of states, political parties and militias allied with Iran, Qatar and Kuwaiti extremist financiers.

### [Iran Praises Iraq for Passing Law Against Normalisation with Israel](#)

May 30, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has praised Iraq's parliament for passing a law that criminalises normalising relations with Israel, including business ties.



## Iran

### [Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian to Visit India Next Week](#)

June 05, 2022, The Economic Times

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian will visit India next week. Connectivity via the Chabahar port, the situation in Afghanistan and global energy markets are expected to dominate the bilateral talks.

### [Iran to Face Censure from Major European Countries and US Amid Stalled Nuclear Talks](#)

June 06, 2022, Firstpost

Major European countries and the United States are expected to seek to censure Iran when the UN's atomic watchdog 'IAEA' meets this week amid stalled talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

### [US, European Allies Push for IAEA Resolution Disrupts JCPOA Revival Talks: Iran FM](#)

June 03, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iran says the "unconstructive" move by the United States and its European allies to push for a resolution against Tehran at IAEA will disrupt the process of negotiations aimed at the revival of the 2015 deal.

### [Russia Joins China in Opposing Move Against Iran at UN Nuclear Board](#)

June 04, 2022, Iran International

Russia has joined China in opposing a possible resolution from the United States and 'E3' condemning Iran at next week's meeting of the UN nuclear watchdog.

### [Possibility of Returning to Iran Nuclear Deal 'Shrinking', Says EU Foreign Policy Chief](#)

June 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

"The possibility to strike a deal and return to JCPOA is shrinking. But we still can do it with an extra effort," Josep Borrell said on Twitter, following a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

[Iran Says Delisting IRGC Not Main Obstacle at Vienna Talks](#)

May 26, 2022, Iran International

Iran's Foreign Minister says the country's demand to remove the Revolutionary Guards from the US list of foreign terrorist organizations is a "minor" issue in the negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear deal.

[Iranian Scientist Found Dead in Unclear Circumstances – Reports](#)

June 04, 2022, The Times of Israel

Ayoob Entezari, who held a PhD in aerospace engineering from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, died, the reports said. He was reportedly employed at a research and development center in the city of Yazd, where he worked on developing missiles and drones.

## Israel

### [India, Israel Adopt 'Vision Statement' To Boost Defence Cooperation](#)

June 02, 2022, Business Standard

Marking 30 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries, India and Israel adopted a "vision statement" which will pave the way for strengthening defence cooperation in future.

### [PM Bennett to IAEA Chief: Israel Reserves Right to Act Against Iran's Nuclear Program](#)

June 03, 2022, The Times of Israel

A statement from Bennett's office said the premier warned International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi that Iran was pushing ahead on developing a nuclear weapon while misleading the world with "false information and lies" to conceal its work.

### [US President Biden's Israel Visit Postponed to July - NBC](#)

June 04, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

President Biden's trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia was postponed until next month as Washington plans a more comprehensive Middle East trip, including a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Riyadh.

### [Israel, UAE Boost Ties with Free Trade Pact](#)

May 31, 2022, Reuters

Israel signed a free trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates, its first with an Arab state and one which eliminates most tariffs and aims to lift their annual bilateral trade to more than \$10 billion.

### [US Says It Remains Committed to Reopening Jerusalem Consulate for Palestinians](#)

June 01, 2022, Arab News

The Biden administration remains committed to re-opening a US consulate in Jerusalem and is further discussing the issue with Israelis and Palestinians, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

## Jordan

### [Saudi PIF Buys 23.97% Stake in Jordan's Capital Bank Group](#)

June 05, 2022, Reuters

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), said it will buy a 23.97% stake in Capital Bank Group, one of the largest banking groups in Jordan, Iraq and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

## Kuwait

### [Kuwait Will Ask India to Exempt It from The Wheat Export Ban](#)

June 01, 2022, Arab Times

The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Fahd Al-Shariaan, will be attending a meeting with the Indian ambassador to Kuwait, Sibi George, in an effort to persuade the Indian government to exclude Kuwait from wheat ban exports.

### [Kuwait Summons Top U.S. Diplomat Over Pro-LGBTQ Tweets](#)

June 03, 2022, NBC News

Kuwait summoned a top U.S. diplomat over tweets from the American Embassy expressing support for LGBTQ rights, the country's foreign ministry said.

### [Kuwait's Foreign Minister Meets Russian Counterpart](#)

June 02, 2022, Arab Times

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah met Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the joint ministerial meeting between the GCC states and the Russian Federation, which was held earlier today in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

## Lebanon

### [Lebanon Warns Against Any Israeli 'Aggression' in Disputed Waters](#)

June 05, 2022, AL Jazeera

Lebanon has warned Israel against any "aggressive action" in disputed waters in eastern Mediterranean where both states hope to develop offshore energy, after a ship arrived off the coast to produce gas for Israel.

## Oman

### [PFI's Received Funds from Chinese Firm in Oman: Enforcement Directorate](#)

June 03, 2022, The Economic Times

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has claimed that it has found a 'Chinese link' to the funding of Popular Front of India (PFI). According to people in the know, a man who worked with a Chinese national in Oman is under probe for 'arranging more than INR 1 crore for PFI under the guise of trading'.

## Qatar

### [Qatar's Investment in India Grows 5 Times Since March 2020, Can Be Substantially Increased: Vice President Naidu](#)

June 05, 2022, Mint

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu said Qatar's investment in India has grown five times since March 2020, however, it is still below the potential level and can be significantly increased.



## Saudi Arabia

### [Saudi Arabia Condemns Indian Ruling Party Leader's Blasphemous Comments against Prophet Muhammad](#)

June 05, 2022, Saudi Gazette

Saudi Arabia condemned the statements of the spokesperson of India's ruling 'Bharatiya Janata Party' (BJP) insulting Prophet Muhammad.

### [Saudi Arabia's Abdul Latif Jameel to Invest \\$220m in Indian EV Firm Greaves Electric Mobility](#)

June 02, 2022, Gulf News

Saudi Arabia's Abdul Latif Jameel will invest \$220 million in the Indian EV manufacturer, Greaves Electric Mobility. The latter is one of the biggest names in India's two- and three-wheeler space.

### [OPEC+ Raises Output Faster Than Expected as Russia's War Roils Global Energy Markets](#)

June 02, 2022, CNBC

OPEC+ will increase production by 648,000 barrels per day in both July and August 2022, bringing forward the end of the historic output cuts OPEC+ implemented during the throes of the Covid pandemic.

### [GCC Members Stand United on Russia-Ukraine Crisis, Saudi Foreign Minister Says](#)

June 01, 2022, The National News

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have highlighted the negative repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict during meetings with top diplomats from both countries, says Saudi Arabia's foreign minister during his opening speech at the GCC meeting.

### [Secretary Blinken: Saudi Arabia is a 'Critical Partner' in Expanding Abraham Accords](#)

June 03, 2022, The Times of Israel

US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, said that Saudi Arabia is a "critical partner" in countering Iran's power in the Middle East as well as helping to expand the Abraham Accords, which normalised ties between Israel and Arab nations.

[Two Saudi Delegations to Visit US as Ties Improve](#)

June 05, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Two Saudi government delegations plan to visit the United States this month, officials said, as Riyadh and Washington step up efforts to fix strained ties and lay the ground for an eventual visit by US President Joe Biden.

## Syria

### [Russia Urges Turkey Not to Launch Offensive in Northern Syria](#)

June 02, 2022, AL Jazeera

Russia urged Turkey not to launch an offensive in northern Syria after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan renewed threats of a military campaign targeting Kurdish "terrorists".

### [Syrian Army Should Use Air Defences Against Turkish Invasion, U.S.- Backed Force Says](#)

June 05, 2022, Reuters

The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) would coordinate with Syrian government troops to fend off any Turkish invasion of the north, the SDF commander said adding that Damascus should use its air defence systems against Turkish planes.

### [Iranian Official Says Iran Won't Replace Russia in Syria](#)

June 04, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Vahid Jalalzadeh, the chairman of Iran's Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, gave an interview saying that the Islamic Republic would continue to support the Syrian regime but that reports it was replacing Russians in Syria were mistaken.

## Turkey

### [Turkey, Pakistan Vow to Enhance Bilateral Ties With 'Strategic Perspective'](#)

June 02, 2022, China.org.cn

"We are ready to further strengthen Turkey-Pakistan relations with a strategic perspective in line with the history, friendship and potential of the two countries," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a joint press conference in Ankara with visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

### ['Wheat Was Bought by Netherlands': Piyush Goyal on Turkey Rejecting Indian Consignment](#)

June 03, 2022, Hindustan Times

Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the wheat consignment was actually bought by the Netherlands, and the fact that it eventually was given to Turkey came as a surprise to Kolkata-based conglomerate ITC as well. Goyal added that he had full faith in the quality of the export by "such a big company".

### [Turkey's Threat to Derail Swedish and Finnish Bid to Join NATO Reraises the Kurdistan Question](#)

June 03, 2022, The Brookings Institution

Turkey's opposition to Sweden and Finland joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the wake of Russia's war on Ukraine has elevated the Kurdish question on the international stage.

### [NATO Needs to Consider Divorce from Turkey – Former U.S. Diplomat](#)

June 03, 2022, Ahval

NATO needs to consider a divorce from Turkey because growing differences between the alliance and Ankara are becoming irreconcilable, said Elizabeth Shackelford, a former U.S. diplomat.

### [YPG Poses Threat to Syria's Territorial Integrity, Turkey Tells US](#)

June 02, 2022, Daily Sabah

The PKK terrorist group's Syrian branch YPG poses a threat to not only Syria's territorial integrity but Turkey's national security as well, Turkey told the United States.

## UAE

### [U.S. and UAE Discuss Strategic Security Agreement](#)

June 01, 2022, Axios

The Biden administration and the United Arab Emirates are discussing a possible strategic agreement that would give the Gulf country certain U.S. security guarantees, two current and former U.S. officials. said.

### [Oil Rallies as China's Emergence from Lockdown Puts Upward Pressure on Demand](#)

June 06, 2022, The National News

Oil prices extended their bull run in early trading on Monday (June 06) as the market factored in higher demand from China, which is currently easing Covid-19 restrictions. Benchmark Brent crude price stands at USD 120.70 a barrel, while WTI crude at USD 119.90 a barrel.

### [India Likely to Stonewall China's Bid to Expand BRICS](#)

June 04, 2022, The Sunday Guardian

"New Delhi is of the view that Beijing has initiated this 'illogical' move with the clear objective to increase its influence and exercise its authority in the group," top diplomatic sources at South Block said.

## Yemen

### [UN: Yemen's Warring Sides Resume Talks on Ending Taiz Siege](#)

June 05, 2022, Arab News

The UN mission to Yemen said delegations from the internationally recognized government and the Iran-backed Houthis began their second round of direct discussion in the Jordanian capital of Amman.



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