



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

Continuing the deepening India-Saudi Arabia strategic partnership, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah on September 11. Dr. Jaishankar conveyed the greetings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and appraised the Saudi Crown Prince of the progress made in bilateral ties. Earlier, Dr. Jaishankar co-chaired the Political, Security, Social, and Cultural Committee of the India-Saudi Partnership Council with his counterpart Faisal bin Farhan. The two leaders discussed contemporary global political and economic concerns and agreed to work closely in G20 and other multilateral organisations for “shared growth, prosperity, stability, security, and development”. Further, India signed an MoU with the ‘Gulf Cooperation Council’ (GCC) on the mechanism of consultations between the two sides.

Amidst India’s push for free trade agreements (FTA) with like-minded partners, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal stressed that “New Delhi will not sign an FTA with Israel until it gets a good agreement that is reciprocally beneficial”. Meanwhile, even as US-China relations remain strained, Israel is reportedly in the final stages of signing an FTA with China by the end of 2022.

As Iran continues to insist on ending the IAEA probe into uranium traces found at undeclared nuclear sites in the country, Germany, France, and Britain (E3) expressed “serious doubts” about Tehran’s intentions in the nuclear talks. Iran rejected the E3 statement as “unconstructive and ill-considered” and called upon them to stop following Israel’s lead in JCPOA talks. In the backdrop of these developments, EU’s Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell is “less optimistic” about the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Open-source intelligence reports also point to the US indicating to Israel that a “nuclear deal with Iran is off the table for the time being”, at least until after US mid-term elections slated for November. Israel’s Knesset (parliamentary) election is also scheduled to be held on November 1.

Adding to the existing US-Iran tensions, Washington has imposed new sanctions on Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security for alleged “malign cyber activities” targeting Albania’s government websites. In response to these cyberattacks, Albania has cut diplomatic relations with Iran. Meanwhile, IRGC Navy unveiled the ‘Shahid Soleimani Warship’ that Tehran believes will enable its Navy to establish a strong presence on the high seas.

Highlighting Iran's growing proximity with China and Russia, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is scheduled to attend the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Summit in Uzbekistan on September 16-17. SCO is also likely to grant dialogue partner status to Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Amidst fears of global economic slowdown, with a view to bolstering oil prices, OPEC+ has decided to cut crude production by 100,000 barrels per day from October 2022. Crude prices continue to hover around USD 90 per barrel. In an important development, even as the G7 remains firm on imposing a "price cap" on Russian crude exports, India maintained that it will support the US-proposed price cap only if crude supplies from Iran and Venezuela are assured. Russia, on the other hand, has offered further discounts on its crude to India, provided New Delhi opposes the price cap.

Underscoring the deepening of bonds between China and the Arab countries, the first China-Arab Summit is likely to be held in Saudi Arabia in December 2022.

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

Bahrain

[Gulf States Demand Netflix Pull Content Deemed Offensive](#)

September 6, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Gulf Arab states have demanded that US streaming giant, 'Netflix', remove content deemed offensive to "Islamic and societal values" in the region, Saudi Arabia's media regulator said.

Egypt

[Egypt, India Discuss Strengthening Bilateral Relations, International Issues](#)

September 12, 2022, Daily News Egypt

Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry received a telephone call from his Indian counterpart Subramaniam Jaishankar, where they discussed bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common interest.

[Egypt to Adopt Russian Mir Payment System to Encourage Tourism, Trade Exchange](#)

September 8, 2022, AL-Monitor

Russian tourists and companies will be allowed to pay through the Russian Mir system in Egypt ahead of the winter season, which Cairo is hoping will boost its tourism sector.

[Queen Elizabeth II: The End of The 'New Elizabethan Age'](#)

September 9, 2022, Daily News Egypt

If Elizabeth I's reign was a period of colonial expansion, conquest, and domination, then the "new Elizabethan age" was marked by decolonisation and the loss of the British Empire.

Iraq

[Iraq: 11 Islamic State Militants Killed in Airstrikes in Anbar and Diyala Provinces](#)

September 11, 2022, Times Now

Eleven Islamic State (IS) militants were killed in airstrikes in western and eastern Iraq, the Iraqi military said. Seven militants including a local leader were killed and a hideout was destroyed in airstrikes in the al-Jallaiyat area in Anbar Province in western Iraq.

[US President Joe Biden Honours 9/11 Victims at Pentagon](#)

September 12, 2022, Times Now

US President Joe Biden paid tribute to the victims of the 9/11 terror attack by al-Qaeda terrorists, taking part in a remembrance event at the Pentagon, and delivered remarks to honor those killed.

Iran

[Iran's President Raisi to Attend SCO Summit in Uzbekistan](#)

September 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will be attending the upcoming summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which will be held in Uzbekistan's Samarkand on 16 and 17 September.

[India, Iran Close to Finalising Long-term Agreement on Chabahar Port](#)

September 22, 2022, Hindustan Times

India and Iran are close to striking a long-term agreement for operations at the strategic Chabahar port, with the matter held up only by differences on a clause related to arbitration.

[India to Support US-Proposed Price Cap on Russian Crude Only If Supplies from Venezuela, Iran Assured](#)

September 6, 2022, Times Now

India will support the US-proposed price cap on Russian crude only if oil supplies from countries like Venezuela and Iran are assured.

[Countering G7 Price Cap Proposal, Russia Offers Discounted Oil to India](#)

September 11, 2022, Business Standard

In a bid to counter the growing clamour among the G7 nations to enforce a price cap on Russian oil, Moscow has told New Delhi it is willing to provide petroleum at even lower rates than before to India, officials said.

[Europeans Doubt Iran's Intentions in Nuclear Talks](#)

September 10, 2022, Reuters

France, Britain and Germany (E3) said they had "serious doubts" about Iran's intentions to revive a nuclear deal, comments that were rejected by Tehran and called "very untimely" by Moscow.

[Albania Cuts Diplomatic Ties with Iran Over Cyberattack](#)

September 7, 2022, AL Jazeera

Albania has cut diplomatic ties with Iran and expelled the country's embassy staff over a significant cyberattack nearly two months ago that was allegedly carried out by Tehran on Albanian government websites, according to the prime minister.

[The US Imposes New Sanctions on Iran over Albanian Cyberattack](#)

September 9, 2022, AL Jazeera

The Biden administration has imposed new sanctions on Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security over what it called "malign cyber activities" as the two countries struggle to find a way back into the 2015 nuclear deal.

[EU's Foreign Policy Chief Says Less Optimistic About JCPOA Revival, Continues Consultations with Participants](#)

September 5, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

The European Union's Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell, says he is "less optimistic" about reaching a quick agreement on the revival of the 2015 US-abandoned nuclear agreement but will continue consultations with all parties to the deal, particularly the United States.

[Iran Has Enough Uranium Near Weapons-grade for a Bomb, IAEA Report Shows](#)

September 7, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran's stock of uranium enriched to up to 60 per cent, close to weapons-grade, has grown enough, if enriched further, for a nuclear bomb, a report by the United Nations nuclear watchdog showed.

['Soleimani' Warship Gives Iran Presence in International Seas, Says IRGC Navy](#)

September 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, Commodore Alireza Tangsiri has stated that the country's naval forces will have a presence in international waters, which he attributed to the recently unveiled Martyr Soleimani warship.

Israel

[China, Israel Free-trade Deal, Beijing's First in the Middle East, in 'Last Stages' Amid Troubles with the US](#)

September 8, 2022, South China Morning Post

China and Israel aim to sign a free-trade agreement by the end of 2022, an Israeli official said, in a breakthrough that would give Beijing its first deal in the Middle East plus a boost after years of trade friction with Australia and the United States.

[No FTA with Israel Until We Get a Good Deal: Piyush Goyal](#)

September 8, 2022, The Financial Express

India won't hammer out a free trade agreement (FTA) with Israel until it gets a good deal, as the pact has to be "reciprocally beneficial", Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said, indicating that Israel has to sweeten its market access offer for any such FTA to be a reality.

[Nuclear Deal with Iran Off the Table for Time Being, US Has Indicated to Israel](#)

September 7, 2022, The Times of Israel

A new nuclear deal between Iran and world powers is off the table and will not be signed in the foreseeable future. This is the message that was conveyed to Prime Minister Yair Lapid in his recent conversations with US President Joe Biden and other administration officials.

[Mossad to CIA: Israel Will Not Stand by as Iran Defrauds the World](#)

September 8, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Mossad Director David Barnea has told CIA Director William Burns and other top American officials that "Israel will not stand by while Iran continues to defraud the world," about its nuclear program and terrorism, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office said.

[E3 Must Accept Consequences if it Continues Following Israel's Lead in JCPOA Revival Talks: Iran](#)

September 10, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iran has slammed the latest "unconstructive and ill-considered" statement issued by the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, saying the E3 must accept the consequences if it continues to follow Israel's lead.

[Israeli PM Lapid Heads to Berlin for Fresh Pitch Against Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

September 11, 2022, AL Arabiya

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid took off for Germany, in his latest diplomatic effort to persuade Western powers to ditch a nuclear deal with Iran.

[In Signal to Iran, Israeli Jets Again Escort US Bombers Through Region](#)

September 5, 2022, The Times of Israel

Three Israeli F-16i fighter jets escorted two American B-52 bombers as they made their way through Israeli airspace en route to the Persian Gulf, in a show of military might to Iran.

[Israel to Remain in Political Deadlock, Poll Finds Ahead of November Elections](#)

September 9, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The poll published by the Israeli daily, Maariv, showed the bloc of opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, securing 59 seats, while that of current Prime Minister, Yair Lapid, and his Defence Minister, Benny Gantz, appeared to receive 55 seats in the 120-member parliament.

Jordan

[Jordan Calls for Increasing Aid for Refugees](#)

September 11, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Jordan called for rallying efforts to increase aid to refugees in the Middle East region.

Kuwait

[Arab League Committee Calls for Action Against Israeli Measures in Jerusalem](#)

September 7, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Arab League's Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem has called for stronger joint action against Israeli measures to change the historical and legal status quo in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The committee made its call after its fifth meeting in Cairo on the fringe of the 158th regular session of the League's foreign ministers.

Lebanon

[Israeli Official Confirms Progress in Lebanon Maritime Talks but Says Gaps Remain](#)

September 11, 2022, The Times of Israel

A senior Israeli official confirmed that slow-moving negotiations with Lebanon over the disputed maritime border between the countries were making progress, but asserted there was still significant work to be done.

Oman

[Queen Elizabeth II: Middle Eastern Leaders Mourn Death of The Monarch](#)

September 8, 2022, Middle East Eye

Middle Eastern leaders and royals have sent condolences to the United Kingdom's royal family over the death of Queen Elizabeth II, who had many connections in the region.

Qatar

[EU Opens Office in Gas-rich Qatar Amid Energy Crisis](#)

September 7, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The European Union opened an office in Qatar, in a sign of the Gulf State's growing influence in solving the international energy crisis.

[Israel Wants Diplomatic Presence in Qatar for FIFA World Cup, Held Talks in Doha - Report](#)

September 8, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Jerusalem is holding direct discussions with Doha with the aim of reaching an agreement that would see Israel be able to provide consular assistance to Israelis planning to travel to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, taking place in Qatar this winter.

Saudi Arabia

[India-Saudi Ties Promise Shared Growth, Security, Stability, Says External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar](#)

September 12, 2022, The Indian Express

Emphasising the importance of strategic economic ties between India and Saudi Arabia, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that the collaboration holds the “promise of shared growth, prosperity, stability, security and development”.

[India Signs MoU with Gulf Cooperation Council to Facilitate Consultation](#)

September 11, 2022, Business Standard

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Secretary-General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf on the mechanism of consultations between India and the GCC.

[OPEC+ Surprises Energy Markets with a Small Production Cut](#)

September 5, 2022, CNBC

OPEC and non-OPEC partners, an influential energy alliance known as OPEC+, decided to cut production targets by about 100,000 barrels per day from October 2022.

[Oil Prices at 7-month Low, But No Change in Petrol, Diesel Prices in India](#)

September 11, 2022, Business Standard

International oil prices have hit a seven-month low but there is no change in the retail selling price of petrol and diesel in India as the state-owned fuel retailers recoup losses incurred for holding rates for a record five months despite the rising costs.

[Arab-Chinese Summit a 'Milestone' in Strategic Ties](#)

September 10, 2022, Arab News

The Arab League has affirmed that the first Arab-Chinese summit, set to be hosted by Saudi Arabia in December, represents a milestone in the strategic partnership between Arab countries and China.

Syria

[Meet The Hezbollah Militants Behind Iran's Air Defence Project in Syria](#)

September 7, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

The identities of two Hezbollah militants helping build Iran's air defences in Syria were revealed for the first time in a report by independent Israeli intelligence analyst Ronen Solomon.

Türkiye

[Turkey Signals it May Turn to Russia if US Blocks F-16 Jet Sales](#)

September 9, 2022, Daily Sabah

Turkey may turn to other countries such as Russia if the United States fails to follow through on its promise to deliver F-16 fighter jets, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said.

[The US, NATO Call on Turkey, Greece to Discuss Ending Mutual Tension](#)

September 10, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Following tirades of strong remarks, the US and NATO called on Turkey and Greece to use dialogue and diplomatic means to end the mutual tension.

[No Bayraktar Drones for India; Turkish CEO Says Will Sell TB2 UAVs Only to Brotherly Nations Like Pakistan, Ukraine](#)

September 7, 2022, Eurasian Times

In response to being asked if Baykar would think about selling drones to Pakistan's adversary India, Bayraktar answered negatively. "As a company principle, we are against 'war profiteering,' or selling arms to both sides in the conflict," he said.

[President Putin: Almost all of Ukraine's Grain Goes to EU Countries](#)

September 7, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Speaking at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, President Putin warned that an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe may arise in the world because the West exports most of the Ukrainian grain to its countries, and not to the countries in need in Africa.

UAE

[Bayraktar TB2: UAE in Talks to Buy a Large Number of Armed Drones from Turkey](#)

September 8, 2022, Middle East Eye

The United Arab Emirates is in negotiations to make a major purchase of armed drones from Turkish producer Baykar.

[UAE is Progressing Well on Human Rights, UNDP Report Says](#)

September 9, 2022, Middle East Monitor

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says the United Arab Emirates has shown progress on human rights and is in the first place of MENA list.

Yemen

[Yemeni Minister Calls for Curbing Iran's 'Subversive' Activities](#)

September 10, 2022, Arab News

Yemen's Information Minister has called for stronger international action to rein in Iran's destructive activities, warning that Iran is arming the Houthis to weaken the country and gain control over international trade and energy through the Red Sea.



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