



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



Volume IV, Issue 33 | August 15, 2022

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

www.delhipolicygroup.org



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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

India and Oman concluded their Joint Military Exercise "AL NAJAF IV" at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges on August 13. The exercise was aimed at developing "inter-operability" and "acquainting each other with their operational procedures" and "combat drills in a counter-terrorism environment under the United Nations mandate".

Underscoring the growing importance of the Middle East in China's strategic calculus, President Xi Jinping is likely to visit Saudi Arabia in the coming weeks. The Saudis are reportedly planning a gala reception for the Chinese President in stark contrast to the low-key reception held for President Biden in July 2022. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, refused to comment on reports about President Xi's visit to Saudi Arabia. It is to be noted that, Xi Jinping has not made any visit to a foreign country since January 2020.

Salman Rushdie, author of the controversial book "The Satanic Verses" was stabbed in New York on August 12. A suspect named 'Hadi Matar' with sympathy for Shia extremists and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was arrested for "a targeted, unprovoked, [and] pre-planned attack". Meanwhile, the United States has accused an alleged IRGC operative of plotting to kill former US National Security Advisor 'John Bolton' probably as retribution for the US's targeted killing of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in 2020. Tehran rejected Washington's accusations as "ridiculous and baseless" while asserting that "language of force against Iran fails".

Iran launched the "Khayyam Satellite" from Russia-operated Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on August 9. Even as Tehran claimed that the satellite will be used for agriculture and water planning, experts believe it poses a challenge to Israel and the US as Tehran could use it to monitor sensitive sites in Israel and other states in the Middle East. Iran rejected the assertions about intelligence gathering as "childish".

With regards to the Iran nuclear talks, reportedly the European Union (EU) has proposed a "significant new concession to Tehran aimed at speedily ending a UN investigation into undeclared nuclear material found in Iran in 2019". Responding to the EU's "final text" to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran maintained that it was "reviewing the proposals" while claiming that it was in

a “comfortable position in the Vienna talks” while the “West was under pressure to strike a deal”.

Owing to high crude prices, Saudi oil giant Aramco’s profit has surged 90 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2022 to USD 48 billion. Aramco’s overall profits in the first half of 2022 have reached around USD 88 billion. Meanwhile, underscoring the strong Riyadh-Moscow bond, reports point toward Saudi Arabia’s “Kingdom Holding Company” investing in sanctions-hit Russian energy companies including ‘Gazprom’, ‘Rosneft’, and ‘Lukoil’ between February 22-March 22, 2022.

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

Bahrain

[Israel Marks 2-year Anniversary Since Abraham Accords Ink](#)

August 14, 2022, Yedioth Ahronoth (Israel)

The Abraham Accords paved way for Israel to normalize relations with UAE and Bahrain; a recent poll by Washington Institute, however, shows public reaction to Abraham Accords is negative in Bahrain and UAE.

Egypt

[Egypt Hands India COP27 Invitation](#)

August 11, 2022, Egypt Today

President Abdel Fattah al Sisi has invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference [COP27] expected to be held in November 2022 at Sharm al-Sheikh.

[50 Indian Companies Invest Total \\$3.15bn in Egypt: Ambassador Gupte](#)

August 15, 2022, Daily News Egypt

Around 50 Indian companies have invested in various sectors in Egypt with a combined investment exceeding \$3.15bn, according to the Indian ambassador in Cairo, Ajit Gupte.

[US Secretary of Defence Thanks Egyptian Counterpart for Cairo's 'Leadership Role in Region'](#)

August 11, 2022, Egypt Today

US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin thanked Egypt for its role in brokering a ceasefire between Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel during a phone call with Egyptian defence Minister.

Iraq

['No Authority': Iraqi Judiciary Says It Cannot Dissolve Parliament](#)

August 14, 2022, AL Jazeera

Iraq's top judicial body says it does not have the authority to dissolve the country's parliament, days after influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr escalated a political standoff by giving it one week to dismiss the legislature so new elections can be held.

[China Tells Pelosi: Repent from US Sins in Afghanistan, Iraq if You Truly Care About Human Rights](#)

August 12, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

China's Foreign Ministry has called on the US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to express remorse and apologize for the atrocities committed by the Americans in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya if she cared so much about human rights.

[Demonstrations Erupt in Iraq Against Chinese Oil Company](#)

August 9, 2022, The Print

Iraq's law enforcement forces fired live bullets to disperse a demonstration near the headquarters of a Chinese oil company, Petro China, in the southern governorate of Maysan.

Iran

[Salman Rushdie, Author of The Satanic Verses, Attacked on Stage in New York](#)

August 12, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Salman Rushdie, the author of a blasphemous anti-Islam book, "The Satanic Verses" has been attacked on stage during an event in New York.

[Rushdie on Ventilator After Stabbing; Suspect Said to Support Iran's IRGC](#)

August 13, 2022, The Times of Israel

A law enforcement official reportedly said that, according to a review of suspects social media activity, he had sympathies for Shia Muslim extremists and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. There were no known direct links to the IRGC.

[Salman Rushdie Stabbed: Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Reacts to Attack; 'Something Whole World Has Noticed'](#)

August 13, 2022, Republic World

Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that he has read about the attack on novelist Salman Rushdie, who was punched and stabbed in New York and stated that the whole world has noticed it.

[US Accuses Iranian Operative of Plotting to Kill John Bolton](#)

August 10, 2022, AL Jazeera

US authorities have accused an alleged member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of plotting to assassinate former US National Security Advisor John Bolton, probably in retaliation for the killing Iran's General Qassem Soleimani in 2020.

[Iranian FM Amir Abdollahian Says Language of Force Against Iranians Ends in Failure](#)

August 14, 2022, Tehran Times

FM Amir Abdollahian made the comments in response to recent U.S. claims against Iran over a fictitious conspiracy to assassinate former President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton.

[Iran Has Launched its Khayyam Satellite into Orbit](#)

August 11, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iran has just launched its Khayyam satellite into orbit. The satellite was sent into space from the Moscow-operated Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, utilizing a Soyuz 2.1 B rocket.

[EU Proposes Significant Concession to Iran to Revive Nuclear Deal](#)

August 11, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

European Union diplomats trying to break a deadlock in talks over an Iran nuclear accord have proposed a significant new concession to Tehran aimed at speedily ending a U.N. investigation into the Islamic Republic's past atomic activities.

[Iran Rejects U.S. Bullying Amid Nuclear Talks](#)

August 14, 2022, Tehran Times

Mohammad Jamshidi, director of the Iranian president's office for political affairs, insinuated that Iran is in a comfortable position with respect to the Vienna talks over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, while the West is under pressure to get a deal with Iran.

[Iran May Accept EU Nuclear Deal Proposal, Wants Assurances](#)

August 13, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran has stated that it wants assurances and guarantees that no future US president would rescind the nuclear deal should it accept the European Union (EU) proposal to return to the deal.

[Russian Officials Trained in Iran as Part of Drone Deal, U.S. Says](#)

August 11, 2022, Reuters

Russian officials trained in Iran in recent weeks as part of an agreement on the transfer of drones between the two countries, the U.S. State Department said.

[Iran Makes First Import Order Using Cryptocurrency](#)

August 9, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran made its first official import order using cryptocurrency this week, the semi-official Tasnim agency reported, a move that could enable the Islamic Republic to circumvent US sanctions that have crippled the economy.

Israel

[India Voices Support for Diplomatic Efforts Towards Gaza Ceasefire, Urges All Parties to De-escalate Situation](#)

August 9, 2022, News 18

India has voiced support for diplomatic efforts of the UN as well as Egypt that led to a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza and urged all parties to de-escalate the situation to ensure it does not spiral out of control.

[New Iran Satellite Presents Significant Challenge to Israel, US and Allies – Experts](#)

August 10, 2022, The Times of Israel

A new Iranian satellite has surveillance capabilities that present a serious problem for Israel due to its ability to monitor sensitive sites in the country, snapping high-resolution images of objects on the ground, experts have warned.

[Israeli Strikes Hit Iranian Targets Near Russia's Mediterranean Bases](#)

August 14, 2022, Reuters

Israel hit Iranian targets in a series of strikes near the ancestral home region of Syrian President Bashar al Assad, and close to Russia's main Syrian bases on the Mediterranean coast, regional intelligence and Syrian military sources said.

[Russia Holds Israel Responsible for Latest Offensive Against Gaza](#)

August 9, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Russia has blamed Israel for the latest three-day military offensive against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the Foreign Ministry in Moscow has announced.

Jordan

[Jordan Working for WMD-free Middle East, Says FM](#)

August 3, 2022, Arab Times

Jordan is working for the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction through partnerships with the international community, Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi has said.

Kuwait

[Kuwait Names First Ambassador to Iran in over 6 Years](#)

August 14, 2022, South China Morning Post

Kuwait has appointed an ambassador to Iran, both countries said, more than six years after recalling its top envoy to Tehran in solidarity with Saudi Arabia after it severed ties with the Islamic Republic in 2016.

[Kuwait Firmly Supports one-China Principle](#)

August 9, 2022, Xinhua

Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Majdi Ahmed Al-Dhafiri has said his country firmly supports the one-China principle.

Lebanon

[Armed Man Takes Hostages at Beirut Bank Demanding Return of Frozen Funds](#)

August 11, 2022, CNN

An armed man held employees and customers hostage at a bank on Beirut's bustling Hamra street demanding his frozen funds be released.

Oman

[India, Oman's 13-day Joint Military Exercise 'AL NAJAF' Concludes](#)

August 13, 2022, Ministry of Defence Government of India

The aim of the exercise was to achieve inter-operability and to acquaint each other with operational procedures and combat drills in a Counter Terrorism environment under the United Nations mandate. Both armies were able to achieve the stated objectives.

Qatar

[Qatar Blames Israeli 'intransigence' for Delays in the Nuke-free Middle East](#)

August 11, 2022, Doha News

Qatar has reiterated its calls for a nuclear-free Middle East, highlighting the importance of nuclear-free zones in advancing the non-proliferation system and achieving complete nuclear disarmament.

Saudi Arabia

[Chinese President Xi Jinping Expected to Visit Saudi Arabia Next Week](#)

August 11, 2022, The Guardian

The Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to visit Saudi Arabia next week, where plans are underway for a gala reception to match that given to Donald Trump on his first trip abroad as president.

[China Foreign Ministry: No Information to Offer on the Reports About Xi's Visit to Saudi Arabia](#)

August 11, 2022, Reuters

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said that he had no information to offer at the moment when asked to comment on a media report that President Xi Jinping will visit Saudi Arabia next week.

[Saudi Oil Giant Aramco Tops Own Record with \\$48-billion Profit in Q2](#)

August 14, 2022, Business Standard

Saudi energy company Aramco said its profits jumped 90 per cent in the second quarter compared to the same time last year, helping its half-year earnings reach nearly \$88 billion.

[Saudi Arabia's Kingdom Holding Invests in Russian Energy Companies](#)

August 14, 2022, Reuters

Saudi Arabia's Kingdom Holding invested in Russian energy groups Gazprom, Rosneft and Lukoil between Feb. 22 and March 22.

[Saudi, US Forces Launch Joint Military Drill in Yanbu](#)

August 14, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Saudi Arabian and the US have launched a joint military exercise in the Red Sea province of Yanbu.

Syria

[Ship Carrying First Ukraine Grain Cargo Nears Syria](#)

August 14, 2022, Reuters

The first ship to depart Ukraine under a deal to resume grain exports from the country two weeks ago was approaching the Syrian port of Tartous, two shipping sources said, after the vessel had been sailing with its transponder off.

Türkiye

[Moody's Downgrades Turkey Deeper into Junk Territory on Balance of Payments Risks](#)

August 13, 2022, The National News

Moody's Investors Service downgraded Turkey's ratings deeper into junk territory, citing rising pressure on the country's balance of payments with risks of further depletion of foreign currency reserves.

UAE

[UAE-India Ties at 50: A Look Back in Wonder](#)

August 15, 2022, Khaleej Times

The centuries-old ties between the peoples of India and the UAE are rooted in trade and commerce. The ties were established between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE during the glorious Indus Valley Civilisation. This was also the era when the two regions had a flourishing maritime trade.

Yemen

[Confessions by Houthi-affiliated Smugglers Prove Iran's Role in Regional Instability: Yemeni Minister](#)

August 14, 2022, Arab News

Yemen's Minister of Information Muammar Al-Eryani said the confessions of a Houthi-affiliated cell about smuggling weapons from Iran to the militia in Hodeida confirmed Tehran's role in arming the group and undermining truce efforts.



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