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.

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

© 2022 by the Delhi Policy Group

Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003.
www.delhipolicygroup.org
Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 1
Bahrain ................................................................................................................................. 3
Egypt ..................................................................................................................................... 4
Iraq ....................................................................................................................................... 5
Iran .................................................................................................................................. 6
Israel ................................................................................................................................. 8
Jordan ............................................................................................................................... 10
Kuwait .............................................................................................................................. 11
Lebanon ........................................................................................................................... 12
Oman ................................................................................................................................. 13
Qatar ................................................................................................................................. 14
Saudi Arabia .................................................................................................................... 15
Syria ................................................................................................................................. 16
Türkiye ............................................................................................................................. 17
UAE ................................................................................................................................. 18
Yemen ............................................................................................................................... 19
Abstract

India’s Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal concluded his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia on September 19. He co-chaired the Ministerial Meeting of the Committee on Economy and Investments with Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman wherein the two countries identified over 40 areas of cooperation, that among others included “Agriculture and Food Security”, “Energy”, “Technology and IT”, and “Industry and Infrastructure”. They also discussed the “feasibility of institutionalizing Rupee-Riyal trade”, and the “introduction of India’s Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and Rupay cards in Saudi Arabia”.

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which came into effect from May 1, 2022, has made a positive impact on bilateral trade. India’s exports to the UAE, excluding petroleum products, grew from USD 5.17 billion in June-August 2021 to USD 5.92 billion in June-August 2022. Similarly, India’s exports to the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries grew by 44 percent in 2021-22. Continuing their outreach to West Asia, the Foreign Ministers of UAE, India, and France held a trilateral meeting on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly. The ‘I2U2 Group’ (India, Israel, UAE, US) also reiterated its commitment to deepen their economic partnership.

India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Defence Minister Gen. Mohamed Zaki in Cairo on enhancing security cooperation. The two countries also signed a Memorandum of Understanding bolstering defence cooperation across all sectors of mutual interest including the conduct of military exercises, and joint manufacturing, transfer and localization of technology.

President Biden addressed the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 21. Major Middle East issues touched on in his address included “reform of the UN Security Council”, “support for the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict”, and the “US’s determination to not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons”. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, on his part, decried the West’s “double standards” towards his country’s nuclear program. Amidst stalled JCPOA talks, Russia, China, and Iran are likely to hold a joint naval exercise in the Indian Ocean this autumn. In another development of significance, new British Prime Minister Liz Truss is likely to review the possibility of moving the UK’s Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
The death of 22-year-old Iranian woman ‘Mahsa Amini’ in police custody has sparked widespread riots in Iran. Amini was reportedly arrested by Iran’s “morality police” for “unsuitable attire”. Amidst ensuing violence, the US imposed sanctions on Iran’s morality police for suppressing peaceful protestors. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen asserted that “Mahsa Amini was a courageous woman whose death was yet another act of brutality by the Iranian regime against its own people”. Iran, on its part, denounced the US for its role in the riots and summoned British and Norwegian Ambassadors for their interference and hostile media coverage of the unrest.

Owing to the rising interest rates, and global fears of a recession, crude prices fell below USD 80/barrel, lowest level since January 2022.

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

India's Exports To GCC Countries Grew By 44 Percent in 2021-22: FIEO
September 21, 2022, Outlook

Indian exports to the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries grew by 44 percent to about USD 43.9 billion in 2021-22 fiscal year compared to the previous fiscal's USD 27.8 billion with the UAE leading the trade with a remarkable 68 percent growth, according to an apex trade promotion body.

Chinese FM Meets Foreign Ministers of GCC Countries
September 20, 2022, Xinhua

Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries on the side-lines of UNGA.

Israel, Bahrain Start Free Trade Agreement Talks
September 20, 2022, Reuters

Israel and Bahrain have begun negotiating a free trade agreement, Israel's Economy Ministry said.
Egypt

Defence Partnership with Egypt Opens New Window for India in Wider West Asia Region

September 22, 2022, The Economic Times

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Defence Minister Mohamed Zaki held a discussion on military and security matters with Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Zaki and Singh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in military cooperation.

Chinese, Egyptian FMs Meet on Sidelines of UNGA Session

September 25, 2022, Xinhua

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that close contacts between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Egyptian counterpart, Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, have provided strong strategic guidance to China-Egypt relations, adding that the two countries' joint fights against the COVID-19 pandemic and cooperation to boost their development have facilitated a growth momentum of bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership.

Russian President Putin: Egypt is One of Russia’s Most Important Partners in Africa and the Arab World

September 21, 2022, Egypt Independent

President Putin explained that friendly relations with Egypt are gradually being built in accordance with the comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation agreement signed in 2018, as Moscow considers Egypt one of its most important partners in Africa and the Arab world.
Iraq

Crude Oil Prices Fall Below $80 a Barrel
September 23, 2022, The Wall Street Journal
Oil prices (WTI USD 78.91/barrel, Brent 85.21/barrel) fell to the lowest levels since January 2022 as fears about a global recession accelerated and the dollar strengthened further.

US Extends Military Support for Iraq’s Kurdistan Region
September 22, 2022, AL-Monitor
The United States renewed its agreement with Iraq’s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to continue providing security support in the wake of the war against the Islamic State (IS).
Iran

**Iran Offers Indian Firms 30 Percent Stake in Gas Field**
September 25, 2022, The Economic Times

Iran has offered ONGC Videsh Ltd and its partners a 30 per cent interest in the development of the Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf that was discovered by the Indian consortium.

**At UN, Iran's Leader Decrees West's 'Double Standard' Towards Country's Nuclear Programme**
September 21, 2022, United Nations

Taking the rostrum at the annual United Nations General Assembly, Iran's President decried as a great injustice the “double standard” exhibited by Western nations towards what he described as his country’s peaceful nuclear activities.

**President Raeisi Calls for Prosecution of Trump Over Gen. Soleimani's Assassination**
September 21, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi has called for the prosecution of former US President Donald Trump, stressing that Iran will pursue the assassination of the country's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani.

**U.S. Calls Iranian Demand to End Nuclear Probes 'Unreasonable'**
September 22, 2022, Reuters

Iran said it saw no point in reviving a 2015 nuclear pact without guarantees from the United States that it would not withdraw again and unless U.N. inspectors' close probes of Tehran's atomic program, a stance a U.S. official rejected as "unreasonable."

**Iran Protests Western Stance on Mass Protests Over Woman's Death**
September 25, 2022, Reuters

Iran summoned the British and Norwegian ambassadors over what it called interference and hostile media coverage of the nationwide unrest triggered by the death of a woman detained by the morality police.
Mahsa Amini Protests: US Sanctions Iran’s ‘Morality Police’

September 22, 2022, AL Jazeera

The Biden administration has sanctioned Iran’s so-called “morality police” for alleged abuses and violence against Iranian women and protesters, as Iranians have taken to the streets over the recent death of a 22-year-old woman after her detention by the police force.

Iran Denounces U.S. Support for ‘Rioters’

September 25, 2022, Reuters

U.S. support for "rioters" is contrary to Washington's diplomatic stance towards Iran, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said.

Massive Demonstrations of Iranian Nation Against Recent Unrests

September 25, 2022, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)

Hundreds of thousands of Tehrani citizens in their demonstration, while condemning the rioters' destructive acts against public properties, stressed the need for public to counter western governments' plans, aimed at boosting the forced lack of Islamic Hijab in Iran.

US Allows Tech Firms to Boost Internet Access in Iran

September 24, 2022, Associated Press

American tech firms will be allowed to expand their business in Iran, where most internet access has been cut off in response to anti-government protests, the Treasury Department said.

Ukraine to Slash Ties with Iran Over 'evil' Drones Supply to Russia

September 23, 2022, Reuters

Ukraine said it would downgrade diplomatic ties with Iran over Tehran's decision to supply Russian forces with drones, a move President Volodymyr Zelensky called "a collaboration with evil".
Israel

India, Israel, UAE, US Express Commitment to Deepen Economic Partnership
September 21, 2022, Business Standard
The I2U2 grouping of India, Israel, UAE and the US have expressed commitment to deepening their economic partnership and has taken stock of current projects in agriculture and clean energy and reviewed potential projects to help the group's objectives.

Five Key Takeaways from President Biden's UNGA Speech
September 21, 2022, AL Jazeera
In a wide-reaching UN address, the US President slammed Russia and said Washington was not seeking a “cold war” with Beijing. Biden also reaffirmed support for the two-state solution in the Middle East.

PM Lapid: Iran Can Be Forced Into a Better Deal with Strong Military Threat
September 25, 2022, The Jerusalem Post
"In 2015, when President Obama pressed the Iranians to reach a deal, he publicized the bunker-busting bombs the United States had developed. Iranians always blink when presented with the power of a superpower. The only time they shut down their military weapons program was during the US invasion of Iraq. They were scared."

PM Lapid Told UN Majority of Israelis Back 2-State Solution, But Poll Signals Otherwise
September 25, 2022, The Times of Israel
Prime Minister Yair Lapid, speaking at the UN General Assembly said “a large majority of Israelis support the vision” of a two-state solution” and that he is one of them. But the Israel Democracy Institute poll said that only 31 percent of Jewish Israelis back a two-state solution.

Secretary Blinken: US Will Not Be Able to Stop Israel if Hezbollah Attacks Over Gas
September 24, 2022, The Jerusalem Post
The United States will not be able to stop Israel from retaliating against Lebanon if Hezbollah decides to attack it over the Karish gas field, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reportedly told the Lebanese prime minister in a recent meeting.
Israel's UN Envoy: Palestinian President Abbas Uses UN Stage to 'Incite against Israel, Back Terrorists'

September 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Gilad Erdan, Israel's ambassador to the UN, harshly attacked Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas over his address to world leaders at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, claiming it was a "lie-laden speech."

Israeli PM Lapid Hails British PM's Comment on Possible Embassy Move to Jerusalem

September 22, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israeli Prime Minister, Yair Lapid, welcomed the comment of his British counterpart, Liz Truss, over reviewing the possibility of moving the UK embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
Jordan

‘Food Security is the Global Priority,’ Jordan’s King Tells UN
September 20, 2022, Arab News

Jordan’s King Abdullah called for global partnerships to tackle the increasing array of interlocking crises gripping the world, calling out world hunger as the top priority.

Jordan Warns Against Moving the British Embassy to Occupied Jerusalem
September 24, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi warned against the UK moving its embassy to the occupied city of Jerusalem.
Kuwait

Kuwait’s FM Praises UN Safeguard Against ‘Law of the Jungle’
September 26, 2022, Arab Times

Kuwait’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah has described Kuwait’s relationship with the United Nations as “close and historic”, recalling the pivotal role played by the global organisation in issuing more than 20 Security Council resolutions to liberate Kuwait and regain its legitimacy.
Lebanon

‘Bodies Everywhere’: Survivors Recount Lebanon Boat Disaster

September 25, 2022, AL Jazeera

Ninety-seven people have died – including 24 children – after a boat full of asylum seekers heading from Lebanon to Europe capsized in the Mediterranean.
Oman

**Russia, Iran and China to Hold Joint Naval Exercises in the Indian Ocean**
September 23, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran, Russia and China will hold joint naval exercises in the northern Indian Ocean "this autumn", Iranian semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

**Oman Stresses on Centralisation of Palestinian Cause for Stability in the Middle East**
September 24, 2022, Times of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman stressed that the establishment of peace in the Middle East needs the creation of a Palestinian state on all its territories occupied since 1967.
Qatar

US-Qatar Ties ‘at its best’ in 50 Years, Says Official
September 25, 2022, The Peninsula Qatar

The regional spokesman for the US State Department Samuel Warberg has stated that US-Qatari relations are currently going through their best form in more than fifty years.

France’s TotalEnergies Invests $1.5bn in Qatar Gas Expansion Project
September 24, 2022, AL Jazeera

TotalEnergies becomes the first foreign investor in Qatar’s North Field South gas project as Europe scrambles to find new energy sources.
Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Concludes Fruitful Visit to Saudi Arabia

September 19, 2022, Ministry of Commerce and Industry - Government of India

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal visited Saudi Arabia from 18th to 19th September 2022 to attend the Ministerial meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council.

Saudi Arabia Calls on Iran to Urgently Fulfill its Nuclear Commitments

September 25, 2022, Saudi Gazette

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan called on Iran to urgently fulfil its nuclear commitments. Further, Prince Faisal reiterated in his UNGA speech the need to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian crisis through a political solution to protect civilians.

Saudi Crown Prince Meets with Senior US Officials in Jeddah

September 24, 2022, AL Arabiya

Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with senior US diplomats on to discuss energy security, regional developments, and Riyadh’s mediation efforts that secured the release of American prisoners of war from Russia.

Saudi Ambassador Sees Broad Prospects for China-Saudi Arabia Cooperation

September 24, 2022, China Daily

Saudi Arabia looks to work with China to tap into the potential for cooperation between the two countries, facilitating concrete progress in bilateral relations, the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to China said.

U.S. Military is Developing Plans to Open a New Testing Facility in Saudi Arabia

September 7, 2022, NBC News

The U.S. military command responsible for the Middle East and Iran is developing plans to open a new military testing facility in Saudi Arabia, according to three U.S. defence officials familiar with the plans.
Syria

**China Urges U.S. to Stop Military Interventions in Syria at UN Session**

September 23, 2022, CGTN

A senior Chinese diplomat urged the U.S. to stop illegal military operations and stealing oil from Syria, and stop unilateral sanctions against Syria to return human rights, wealth, freedom and dignity to Syrians.

**Iranian Support Vital for Hamas After Ties Restored with Syria**

September 25, 2022, AL Jazeera

Ten years ago, Hamas, the Palestinian movement that rules the Gaza Strip, publicly came out in support of the uprising against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. But, as Turkey and more Arab countries restore ties with Israel, Hamas is left with fewer allies in the region and seeks restoration of ties with Damascus.
Türkiye

Turkish President Erdogan Raises Kashmir at UN Meet Again
September 21, 2022, Hindustan Times

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said it is “unfortunate” that India and Pakistan haven’t been able to establish peace 75 years after independence and hoped for “fair and permanent peace” in Kashmir.

Turkey’s Erdogan to Hold Meeting on Russian MIR Payments, Possible US Sanctions
September 22, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan will convene a top-tier economy-focused meeting on at which the Russian payment system, MIR, and possible Western sanctions will be discussed.

Israel and Turkey’s Leaders Meet at U.N. After Years of Tension
September 21, 2022, The Washington Post

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, thawing a 14-year chill and heralding hopes of collaboration fuelled by the possibility of exporting natural gas to an energy-desperate Europe.
Indo-UAE CEPA Makes Significant Positive Impact on India-UAE Trade

September 25, 2022, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which came into effect on the 1st of May 2022 is already creating a significant positive impact on India-UAE trade. Indian exports to the UAE, excluding petroleum products grew from US$ 5.17 billion during June-August 2021 to US$ 5.92 billion during June-August 2022, which denotes an increase of 14%.

UAE, Indian and French Foreign Ministers Hold Tripartite Meeting in New York

September 20, 2022, Khaleej Times

The meeting, which was held on the sidelines of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, touched on bilateral cooperation and strategic partnership and ways to further develop them to support the three countries’ efforts to achieve economic prosperity and sustainable development.

China and the United Arab Emirates Agree on Joint Lunar Rover Mission

September 21, 2022, South China Morning Post

China has agreed to partner with the United Arab Emirates in an unmanned landing mission to the moon, with the two countries’ space agencies signing a pact in Dubai last week.

Israel Ready to Sell Advanced Air Defense System to UAE

September 23, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israel has agreed to sell an advanced air defence system “SPYDER” to the United Arab Emirates that is capable of defending against various types of aircraft and threats including drones and cruise missiles.
Yemen: Marking ‘significant milestone’, UN Says Stricken Tanker Salvage Operation Can Begin

September 21, 2022, United Nations

The salvage of the ageing super tanker FSO Safer, off the Yemeni coast, can now begin, the UN said, after it announced that more than $75 million have been pledged to carry out the vital operation.