DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

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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.

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Abstract

Deepening the India-Oman partnership, Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan met Oman’s Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi in Muscat on October 4. Both leaders reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, and signed an MoU launching India’s ‘RuPay card’ in Oman ushering in a “new era of financial connectivity”.

With a view to bolstering oil prices, OPEC+ has decided to cut crude production by two million barrels per day beginning November 2022. Owing to this, crude prices have crossed the USD 90 per barrel mark. The United States, on its part, accused OPEC+ of “aligning” with Russia and harming the global economy. Washington is reportedly looking at ways to “reduce OPEC’s control over energy prices”. On the other hand, Russia praised OPEC’s decision as “balanced” and “thoughtful” aimed at “balancing the mayhem caused by the Americans” in the energy markets.

The United Nations Human Rights Council rejected a Western-led motion to hold a debate on human rights violations in China’s Xinjiang, Uyghur Autonomous Region. India abstained from the vote, while, Muslim-majority countries including Pakistan, Qatar, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates voted against the motion. China described this as an important victory against US coercion.

Iran’s Supreme Leader ‘Ayatollah Khamenei’ slammed the United States and the “Zionist Regime” (Israel) for the widespread riots in Iran following the death of ‘Mahsa Amini’. The United States, on the other hand, imposed more sanctions against Iranian officials for their crackdown and suppression of anti-government demonstrations.

Even as Turkey deepens its ties with Russia and China, President Erdogan attended the inaugural summit of the “European Political Community” (EPC) held in Prague on October 6. In his remarks, President Erdogan conveyed his views on the challenges faced by Europe in areas that include security, energy, climate, and economy. European Political Community (EPC) is reportedly a brainchild of French President Emmanuel Macron, a platform created in the aftermath of Russian invasion of Ukraine, for coordination among 44 European nations.

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

Bahrain Pulls Out of U.N. Human Rights Body Election After Criticism
October 4, 2022, Reuters
Bahrain will no longer run in an election to the U.N.'s top human rights body later this month, a U.N. website showed, after critics drew attention to alleged human rights violations.

UN Rejects Debate on Treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Win for China
October 6, 2022, Middle East Eye
The UN Human Rights Council voted against a western-led motion to hold a debate on alleged widespread abuses against Uyghurs and other Muslims in China's Xinjiang region after intense lobbying by Beijing. Muslim-majority countries from Africa and the Middle East voted overwhelmingly with China.

China Calls Xinjiang Vote at UN Human Rights Council a Win Against US 'Coercion'
October 7, 2022, South China Morning Post (SCMP)
The international community is “clearly aware” that the United States and other Western nations intend to use accusations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang as a “tool” to meddle in China’s internal affairs, China’s foreign ministry said.
Egypt

Egypt Freezes Russian MIR Payments to Avoid US Sanctions
October 8, 2022, AL-Monitor

Egypt has shelved plans to apply the Russian MIR payment card system in its resorts and hotels amid worries of possible US sanctions, according to a source at Egypt’s largest state-owned bank.

Egypt Seeks to Attract Chinese Mobile Companies Fleeing India
September 29, 2022, AL-Monitor

Egypt is trying to take advantage of the crisis between Chinese smartphone companies and India by providing incentives to such companies to lure them into investing in the Egyptian market.
Iraq

**Iraq Hopes OPEC+ Decision Will Contribute to World Market Stability**
October 5, 2022, Reuters

Iraq’s oil minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar said that his country hopes that the OPEC+ decision to cut production by 2 million barrels per day will contribute to world market stability and support crude prices.

**More Than 6 Million Unemployed in Iraq**
October 7, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) in Iraq raised the unemployment issue in the country, with the number of those unemployed growing annually, without any solutions. They stressed that the numbers reached 6 million unemployed individuals, amid calls for the government and the concerned authorities to take responsibility for the issue.
Iran

Ayatollah Khamenei: Violent Riots in Iran Planned by the US and Zionist Regime
October 3, 2022, Press TV (Iran)
Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran ‘Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’ has severely censured the unrest that erupted in some parts of Iran following the death of a young woman, stating that the deadly riots were orchestrated in advance by the United States and the Israeli regime.

US Issues More Iran Sanctions over the Crackdown on Protests
October 6, 2022, AL Jazeera
The Biden administration has issued new sanctions against Iranian officials over what it called the “violent suppression of protests” following the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody in Tehran.

Canada to Ban Iran’s IRGC Leadership from Entry
October 9, 2022, Middle East Monitor
Canada said it would ban the senior leadership of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from entering the country, in a set of moves intended to punish the organisation and Tehran's leadership for the violent crackdown on protests and the downing of a plane two years ago.

US, UK Hold Naval Drone Drill in the Persian Gulf Despite Iran Seizures
October 7, 2022, The Times of Israel
The US Navy held a joint drone drill with the United Kingdom in the Persian Gulf, testing the same unmanned surveillance ships that Iran twice has seized in recent months in the Middle East.

Ukraine Faces New Russian Threat from Iran-made ‘Kamikaze’ Drones
September 7, 2022, France 24
The Russian army has stepped up the number of attacks by Iranian-made “kamikaze” drones, aiming a dozen such devices at a town near Kyiv. While their effectiveness is limited, the drones offer a cheap alternative to missile strikes and allow Russian forces to keep up the pressure on Ukrainian cities located far from the frontline.
Israel

US Expands Penalties for Complying with Arab League Boycott of Israel

October 8, 2022, The Times of Israel

The Biden administration will increase penalties for complying with the decades-old Arab League boycott of Israel, at a moment when some long-time participants have opted out and others are doubling down.

Israel Rejects Lebanese Changes to Maritime Border Proposal, Putting Deal in Doubt

October 6, 2022, The Times of Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid rejected Lebanon’s requested modifications to a proposed maritime border deal. Contradicting earlier assertions by Western officials that Lebanon’s objections were minor, Israeli officials called Beirut’s demands “significant.”

U.S. Ambassador Tom Nides Calls Claims Israel Ceded to Hezbollah on Lebanon Gas Deal ‘Ridiculous’

October 8, 2022, Yedioth Ahronoth

Ambassador Tom Nides said the U.S. remains an honest broker in maritime border talks but no way the U.S. will ever support something placing Israel at disadvantage; former PM Netanyahu had supported a similar deal, he added.

Jerusalem Terror: One killed, One in Critical Condition After Shooting

October 9, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

A terrorist opened fire in the direction of a security checkpoint at the entrance to the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shuafat, killing 18-year-old female Military Police officer Noa Lazar, and severely wounding a 30-year-old security guard.

Arab League Condemns Potential UK Move of Israel Embassy to Jerusalem

October 6, 2022, The New Arab

The Secretary-General of the Arab League has warned the UK against any possible move of its Israel embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as the Palestinian foreign ministry said it would be launching a campaign to stop the potential British action.
Jordan

Report: Jordanian Exports to Palestine Jump to 67 Percent
October 5, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Jordanian exports to Palestine have jumped to 67 per cent during the first seven months of 2022, Jordan's General Statistics Department said.
Kuwait

**Indian Navy Ships Visit Reflective of Growing India-Kuwait Bilateral Relations**

October 6, 2022, Arab Times

Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sibi George hosted a special reception on INS Tir, INS Sujata and Indian Coast guard Ship Sarathi at Al-Shuwaikh Port in Kuwait on Oct 5 with overwhelming participation by Kuwaiti officials, diplomats and members of the Indian community.

**US Approves $3 billion NASAMS Air-Defense System for Kuwait**

October 7, 2022, Defence News

The US State Department approved a $3 billion medium-range National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) sale for Kuwait.
Lebanon

Israeli Defence Minister Gantz Warns Hezbollah Against Attacking Israel, Says Gas Deal Possible

October 8, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Defense Minister Benny Gantz threatened to destroy Lebanon if Hezbollah attacks Israel, but struck an optimistic note about the pending maritime gas deal between Israel and Lebanon, saying it was still on the table and could be concluded “within days.”
Oman

**Milestone MOU Signed for Acceptance of RuPay Card and UPI-Based Mobile Payments in Oman**

October 4, 2022, Times of Oman

The MoU will enable the acceptance of Indian RuPay cards issued by banks in India at all OmanNet network ATMs, POS and E-commerce sites; as well as reciprocal acceptance of Oman cards/MPCSS in the networks of NPCI in India.

**Oman, India Enjoy Strategic Relations: MoS MEA V. Muraleedharan**

October 4, 2022, Times of Oman

During his visit to Oman, V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs dubbed the relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of India as “strong” and “strategic”.
Qatar’s Emir Tamim Taps into Energy with UK’s PM Truss as London Scrambles for Gas

October 4, 2022, Doha News

Energy was high on the agenda during a phone call exchanged between Qatar’s Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the United Kingdom Prime Minister Elizabeth Truss, as the new government in Downing Street attempts to navigate through an energy crisis.
Saudi Arabia

**OPEC+ Unleashes Shockwaves with Big Cut to Oil Production**

October 6, 2022, Financial Times

Deep oil production cuts approved by OPEC+ have sent shockwaves across energy markets, put the cartel on a collision course with Washington and pointed to a strengthening bond between Saudi Arabia and Russia.

**U.S. Takes Aim at OPEC for Oil Production Cuts**

October 6, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

OPEC’s decision to slash oil production has the U.S. considering responses that could include measures aimed at breaking the cartel's hold on markets or limiting U.S. oil exports should shortages emerge.

‘Balanced, Thoughtful’: Russia Praises OPEC for Production Cut

October 9, 2022, AL Jazeera

Russia praised OPEC+ for agreeing to sharply cut oil production and fight what it called the “mayhem” sown by the United States in global energy markets.

**Morgan Stanley: Oil Prices Will Hit $100 Next Quarter**

October 6, 2022, Oilprice.com

Oil prices will rise again to $100 per barrel faster than previously estimated, Morgan Stanley said, lifting its price forecast for the first quarter of 2023 to $100 from $95 per barrel.

**Putin and The Saudi Crown Prince: Fears in West as Russia and Saudi Arabia Deepen Ties**

October 5, 2022, The Guardian

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s decision to strengthen relations with Russia has alarmed allies, but he has long admired President Putin.

**IMF Expects Gulf Economies to Grow by 6.5 Percent in 2022**

October 5, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Director-General of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, said that the economies of the Gulf States are expected to grow by 6.5 per cent this year.
Syria

Failed Rocket Attack Targets US Forces in Syria

October 9, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

The US military said late on Saturday (October 8) that unidentified forces fired a rocket at a compound in Syria hosting US troops and partnered local forces, but failed to cause any injuries or damage.
Türkiye

President Erdogan Works to Deepen Ties With Putin Amid Allies' Concerns

October 7, 2022, Voice of America

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held talks by phone with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, to deepen relations. The talks are seen as likely to add to growing concerns among some of Turkey's NATO partners over its relationship with Moscow and where its loyalties lie.

Erdoğan Meets with European Political Community, Discusses Regional Challenges in Prague Summit

October 6, 2022, Daily Sabah

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan participated in the inaugural summit of the "European Political Community (EPC)," discussed regional challenges including Russian aggression, and met with world leaders.
UAE

US Democrats Rally Against Saudi Arabia, UAE After Oil Production Cuts

October 6, 2022, AL Jazeera

Democratic members of the United States Congress are rallying against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates over oil production cuts and calling on President Joe Biden to pressure the Gulf partners to reverse their decision.

GIFT City Nominated to Import 200 Tonne Gold from UAE: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal

October 8, 2022, The Indian Express

GIFT City will be nominated as an agency to import 200 tonnes of gold from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) under the recently signed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the middle-east nation, said Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, during his visit to Gujarat.

Government of Dubai Finalizes MoU for Economic Cooperation with India’s Haryana

October 7, 2022, The Indian Express

A delegation of the Haryana government led by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, visited the UAE on October 3 and 4 to promote Haryana as a leading investment destination and for marketing key marquee projects of the state.
Yemen

Saudi Arabia's FM and US Secretary of State Discuss Regional, International Matters
October 2, 2022, AL Arabiya

"During the call, they reviewed aspects of relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America and ways to strengthen and develop them in all areas of cooperation," the statement shared by the foreign ministry on Twitter said.

End of Yemen's Truce Leaves Civilians Afraid Dark Days Are Back
October 7, 2022, AL Jazeera

The truce lasted for six months and expired on October 2, with efforts to renew it unsuccessful so far.

EU 'Deeply Concerned' by Houthi Threat to Strike Saudi, Emirati Oil Sites
October 6, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The European Union is "deeply concerned" by the Yemeni Houthis' threat to attack oil sites in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and called on all Yemeni parties to exercise calm and restraint.