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DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

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Abstract

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated ‘Benjamin Netanyahu’ for winning a decisive majority in Israel’s Knesset (Parliamentary) election held on November 1 and looked forward to continuing “joint efforts to deepen the India-Israel strategic partnership”. As Netanyahu’s Likud Party and its allies won 64 seats in the 120-member Israeli Knesset, concerns were expressed about “far-right Jewish elements” forming the government. Considering this, Israeli President Isaac Herzog called upon the US Jews to “respect Israel’s election result even if they do not like it”.

The 27th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the ‘United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’ (UNFCCC) opened in Egypt on November 6. Indian delegation led by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav will seek progress on climate finance including the supply of technology to address climate change. In line with Prime Minister Modi’s vision, Minister Yadav inaugurated India Pavilion on the theme “LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment”, calling on the delegates to “undertake simple lifestyle changes and practices that are sustainable and can help protect Earth”.

Russia has once again emerged as India’s top crude supplier in October 2022 surpassing Saudi Arabia and Iraq. India’s Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri attended the ‘Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference’ (ADIPEC 2022) in UAE. At the conference, he highlighted the “intended and unintended consequences of high energy prices, that on one end, is leading to a global recession, while it is also hastening India’s energy transition across biofuels, green hydrogen, and electric vehicles”. At ADIPEC, OPEC launched the 2022 edition of its ‘World Oil Outlook’ calling for higher investments in the oil industry to prevent future energy emergencies owing to higher global demand.

The Arab League concluded its two-day summit in Algiers on November 2. The bloc’s final declaration underscored its continued “support for Palestinian statehood”, “the protection of sites in Jerusalem against Israeli violations”, and “condemnation of Israel’s use of violence and blockade of Gaza”. Even as the Arab League reiterated its support for Palestine, in the aftermath of the ‘Abraham Accords’, it remains divided and cautious in its criticism of Israel.
Amidst the ongoing women’s rights protests in Iran, President Biden reiterated the US’s resolve to “free Iran” from its clerical regime. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, on his part, reminded Washington that Iran was “freed 43 years ago” and will not be a “milking cow” of Western powers. Despite the growing Russia-Iran strategic partnership, Russia assured Israel that its relations with Iran are not at the cost of those with Tel Aviv. This came in the backdrop of US intelligence claims that “Iran is seeking Russia’s help to bolster its nuclear program”.

Russia has resumed participation in the United Nations and Turkey-brokered grain agreement ending four days of non-cooperation. As the Russia-Ukraine conflict rages unabated, there are reports that US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is holding confidential discussions with his Russian counterparts. Russia, meanwhile, continued its diplomatic outreach in the Middle East with Foreign Minister Lavrov visiting UAE and Jordan.

Among other regional developments, the Head of the Catholic Church, ‘Pope Francis’, attended an interfaith conference in Manama sponsored by Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. Pope Francis expressed deep concerns about “childlike” wars that are “bringing sorrow and death, covering the common home of humanity with ashes and hatred”.

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

Pope Blasts ‘Childlike’ Wars at Bahrain Interfaith Summit
November 4, 2022, The New Indian Express

With Russia’s war in Ukraine raging, Pope Francis joined Muslim, Christian, and Jewish leaders in calling for the world’s great religions to work together for peace, telling an interfaith summit in Bahrain that religion must never be used to justify violence and that faith leaders must counter the “childlike” whims of the powerful to make war.

Israel, Bahrain Eye to Sign Free Trade Deal by Year-End
October 31, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israel and Bahrain agreed to sign a free trade agreement between the two countries by the end of the year.
Egypt

UN Climate Summit Opens in Egypt, India Focuses on Climate Finance
November 6, 2022, The Telegraph

The 27th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP) to UNFCCC will see India seeking clarity on the definition of climate finance -- whether it is grants, loans, or subsidies - and nudging developed countries to enhance the supply of technology and finance needed to address climate change and resulting disasters.

Secretary Blinken’s Call with Foreign Minister Shoukry of Egypt
November 3, 2022, US Embassy in Egypt

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in advance of the 2022 United Nations COP27. The Secretary underscored his appreciation for Egypt’s climate leadership and commitment to further deepening the U.S.-Egypt strategic partnership, which is strengthened by tangible progress on human rights in Egypt.

Coping With Climate Change Must Not Fall into Washington's ‘Confrontation List’: Global Times Editorial
November 7, 2022, Global Times

Since the Biden administration took office, it has been trying to define its relations with China in terms of the 3Cs “Competition, Cooperation, and Confrontation”, and climate change has been listed as one of the few areas where "cooperation" is deemed possible.
Iraq

Russia Becomes India’s Top Oil Supplier in October, Surpasses Saudi Arabia and Iraq

November 6, 2022, Mint

Surpassing traditional suppliers Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Russia has emerged as the top oil supplier to India in October 2022. This comes amid an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine that has seen many Western nations issue sanctions against the Kremlin.

Secretary Blinken’s Call with Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani

November 3, 2022, US Department of State

Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to congratulate him on the October 27 formation of an Iraqi government. The United States is eager to work with the government and people of Iraq to improve respect for human rights, increase economic opportunities, advance Iraq’s energy independence, and address the climate crisis.

US is ‘Here to Stay’ in Iraq, Says Ambassador

November 2, 2022, Rudaw

The United States “is here to stay,” the country’s Ambassador affirmed regarding its presence in Iraq, reiterating that it will not be going anywhere.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang Sends Congratulatory Message to Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ Sabbar al-Sudani of Iraq

November 1, 2022, MFA-People’s Republic of China

Premier Li Keqiang said in his congratulatory message that the Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of China-Iraq relations and is willing to work with the Iraqi government to continuously consolidate traditional friendship between the two countries, advance practical cooperation in various fields, and work towards new progress in China-Iraq strategic partnership.
Iran

**Ready to Resume Oil Supplies, Says Iranian Envoy; Stresses on National Interests**
November 4, 2022, Hindustan Times

Iran has conveyed to India its readiness to resume oil supplies and the two countries should decide on this issue on the basis of their national interests, Iran's New Ambassador to New Delhi, Iraj Elahi said.

**Exclusive: Iran is Seeking Russia’s Help to Bolster its Nuclear Program, US Intel Officials Believe**
November 4, 2022, CNN

Iran is seeking Russia's help to bolster its nuclear program, US intelligence officials believe, as Tehran looks for a backup plan should a lasting nuclear deal with the world powers fail to materialize.

**President Biden Vows to ‘Free Iran' in West Coast Campaign Speech**
November 5, 2022, Reuters

U.S. President Joe Biden vowed to "free" Iran and said that demonstrators working against the country’s government would soon succeed in freeing themselves.

**Raisi: Iran Was ‘Freed 43 Years Ago’ as Country Marks Anniversary of US Embassy Siege**
November 4, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran’s President, Ebrahim Raisi, said the country was "freed 43 years ago" and will not be a "milking cow" of Western powers in response to US President Joe Biden's vow to "free" Iran.

**G7 Ministers Seek to Boost Unity on Ukraine, China, Iran**
November 3, 2022, Associated Press

Top diplomats from the world’s major industrialized democracies sought to expand unified positions on Russia’s war in Ukraine, China’s growing global economic clout and Iran’s crackdown on anti-government protestors.

**U.S. Reacts to Iranian FM’s Remarks Over Drones**
November 6, 2022, Tehran Times

Iran’s Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian said that Iran had given Russia a limited number of drones months before the start of the Ukraine war. In response, the US claimed that Amir Abdollahian’s assertions that Iran had dispatched a few drones
were false. “Dozens” of drones had been sent just last summer, and Iranian "military personnel in occupied Ukraine are helping Russia utilize them."

**Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Launches New Satellite-carrying Rocket**

November 5, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched a new satellite-carrying rocket, state TV reported, seeking to demonstrate the force’s space prowess even as anti-government protests rage across the country.

**Iran Unveils Upgraded Bavar-373 Missile System, Launches Sayad B4 Production Line**

November 6, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iran’s Defense Ministry has unveiled the upgraded version of the domestically designed and manufactured Bavar-373 (Belief-373) surface-to-air missile system and inaugurated the production line of the long-range Sayad B4 missile.

**Iranian Lawmakers Ask Judiciary to Severely Punish Agents, Inciters of Riots**

November 6, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Iranian lawmakers have called for firm punishment of those who incited the recent riots across the country and caused loss of life and extensive damage to public property.
Israel Election Final Results: Benjamin Netanyahu, Jewish Far Right Win Power, Fiasco for Left
November 3, 2022, Haaretz
Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing allies won a decisive majority in Israel's election. Likud won 32 seats, while outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid is the second-largest party with 24 seats, followed by the far-right Religious Zionism – headed by Bezalel Smotrich and Kahanist lawmaker Itamar Ben-Gvir – which earned 14 seats.

PM Modi Congratulates Benjamin Netanyahu on Winning Israel Elections
November 4, 2022, India Today
Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Benjamin Netanyahu, who won the Israeli general elections. PM Modi wrote in Hebrew on Twitter, "I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to deepen the strategic partnership between India and Israel."

Arabs View Revived Netanyahu with Concern But As Balance Against Iran
November 3, 2022, Reuters
Benjamin Netanyahu's likely return to power will fuel concern about deepening tensions with Arab neighbours, but Gulf states which forged ties with Israel under his leadership will see him as a regional balance against Iranian power.

Biden and Netanyahu Gear Up for a Complicated New Era
The two leaders will find themselves in the position of sparring anew over issues that have long strained their relationship including the Iran nuclear deal.

Russia Said to Threaten Retaliation if Israel Supplies Defence Aid to Ukraine
November 4, 2022, The Times of Israel
Russia has warned Israel that it will retaliate if Tel Aviv sends defensive weapons to Ukraine.

UK Has 'no plans' to Move its Embassy to Jerusalem, Government Says
November 3, 2022, Middle East Monitor
Britain's new government led by Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, ruled out moving the UK Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
Hamas Mourns Death of Muslim Brotherhood Guide Ibrahim Munir

November 5, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas mourns the death of Ibrahim Munir, former acting leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, who died in London, aged 85.

Israel Expected to Tighten Restrictions On Chinese Investment In Face of Growing US Pressure

October 25, 2022, South China Morning Post

The Israeli government is expected to approve new foreign investment restrictions targeting China in the face of growing pressure from the United States.
Jordan

Jordan Said To Warn Incoming Israeli Government Against Touching Temple Mount Status Quo

November 7, 2022, The Times of Israel

Jordanian officials have reportedly warned that bilateral ties with Israel will suffer if Jerusalem’s new government tries to change the status quo arrangement on the flashpoint Temple Mount.
Kuwait

Kuwait Appoints New CEOs for State Oil Companies
November 7, 2022, Zawya (Refinitiv)

Ahmed Jaber al-Aydan was appointed as CEO of Kuwait Oil Company, and Wadha al-Khateeb as CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC). New leaders were also chosen for Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) and other state companies in the sector.
Lebanon

Top US Official Says Lebanon Will Face More Pain Before a New Government Forms
November 4, 2022, Middle East Eye

Washington's top Middle East diplomat has said Lebanon will likely have to bear more pain before the impoverished Mediterranean country forms a new government, with the potential for a complete "unravelling" of the state.

Taif Agreement is Best Solution to Lebanon Crisis, Saudi Arabia Stands with Lebanon: Mikati
November 6, 2022, Arab News

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister and the Saudi Ambassador in Beirut underlined the importance of the Taif Agreement at a conference.
Oman

UN Secretary-General Lauds Oman’s Efforts in Backing Peace, Stability in Middle East, World
November 6, 2022, Times of Oman

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres commended the efforts undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in backing peace and stability in the Middle East and the world at large.

World Bank Upbeat on Oman’s Financial Recovery Measures
November 6, 2022, Times of Oman

The World Bank has credited the Sultanate of Oman’s fiscal consolidation and public finance reform measures for rapidly putting back on rails the domestic economy after the turmoil unleashed by the global downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic.
Qatar

Qatari Foreign Minister Slams Hypocrisy of People Calling for FIFA World Cup Boycott

November 4, 2022, Middle East Monitor

People calling for a boycott of the World Cup in Qatar are from a handful of countries that do not represent the rest of the world, which is looking forward to the tournament, Qatar’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said.

GCC Condemns German Minister’s Remarks on Qatar World Cup 2022

October 30, 2022, AL Jazeera

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has condemned remarks by Germany’s interior minister on the World Cup due to be hosted by Qatar between November 20 and December 18.
Saudi Arabia

**OPEC: Higher Oil Investments Are Needed to Avoid Rampant Volatility**

November 4, 2022, Oilprice.com

The oil industry needs to increase investment in capacity and new production so that the oil market can avoid high volatility in the future, OPEC's Secretary General Haitham Al Ghais said.

**Arab League Says Palestinian Cause Central, Glosses Over Israel**

November 2, 2022, AL Jazeera

Arab leaders have closed their first summit meeting in two years by reiterating the centrality of the Palestinian cause, albeit avoiding addressing their own splits over normalising ties with Israel.

**White House Discusses Iran Protests, Ukraine War, North Korean Missiles, US-Saudi Ties**

November 5, 2022, Voice of America

John Kirby, the National Security Council's coordinator for strategic communications, speaks about whether President Joe Biden is signalling his support for regime change in Iran, the latest on the Ukraine war, North Korean provocations ahead of Biden's trip to Asia and whether the President will meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

**Pakistan Receives Assurances of $13 Bn Package from China, Saudi Arabia**

November 5, 2022, Business Standard

Pakistan has got assurances of a $13 billion financial package from China and Saudi Arabia, including $5.7 billion in fresh loans that would help stabilise the reserves and the rupee, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said in a statement.
Jordan Seeks Closer Coordination with Russia Over Syria

November 3, 2022, Middle East Eye

Russia and Jordan agreed to ramp up coordination on Syria during a visit by Russia’s top diplomat to the Hashemite Kingdom, underscoring how even one of US’s closest allies in the region has continued to engage with Russia despite the war in Ukraine.
Türkiye

Swedish Distances Itself from Kurdish Groups to Win Turkey’s NATO Support

November 6, 2022, The Financial Times

Sweden’s new centre-right government said it would distance itself from several Kurdish groups as the Scandinavian country’s prime minister prepares to meet Turkey’s president to persuade him to back its application to join NATO.

Türkiye, Russia Agree to Send Grains To African Countries For Free

November 4, 2022, Daily Sabah

Türkiye and Russia have reached an agreement to deliver grain sent under the Black Sea export deal free of charge to nations in need, particularly African countries, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said.

Biden Aide Held Talks with Russian Officials Amid Nuclear Tensions: Report

November 7, 2022, Reuters

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has held undisclosed talks with top Russian officials in hopes of reducing the risk the war in Ukraine spills over or escalates into a nuclear conflict.

Ukraine War Gives Turkey’s Erdogan Opportunity to Extend His Influence

November 5, 2022, The Wall Street Journal

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is deepening his country’s military support for Ukraine while keeping an open line of communication to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin—a relationship that helped keep Ukrainian grain exports flowing this week—as he tries to expand Turkey’s role as a regional power broker.
UAE

Union Petroleum Minister Puri Meets OPEC Secretary General, ADNOC CEO in Abu Dhabi
October 31, 2022, Mint

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri met the Secretary General of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Haitham al-Ghais among other dignitaries in Abu Dhabi.

Russia’s FM Lavrov Meets UAE’s Sheikh Abdullah on a two-day Visit to Abu Dhabi
November 4, 2022, AL Arabiya

The UAE Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Abu Dhabi, signalling stronger ties between the two countries. The meeting was to discuss the existing strategic partnership and bilateral efforts to “enhance prospects for more collaboration across all fronts”.

‘Chinese Modernisation’ Set to Provide Newer Opportunities for the UAE
November 4, 2022, Khaleej Times

The ‘Chinese modernisation’ is set to provide newer opportunities for the UAE, especially in the fields of technological innovation and pragmatic global energy transition.
Yemen

US, UK Preparing for Fresh Escalation in Yemen: Ansarullah (Houthi Rebels)
November 6, 2022, Press TV (Iran)

Yemen's popular resistance Ansarullah movement warns about the United States and the UK's fresh malicious intentions in the war-ravaged country.