



# 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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### 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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

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## Abstract

Citing “strong strategic partnership with India”, Saudi Arabia has decided to exempt Indian nationals from submitting police clearance certificate (PCC) to obtain visa. New Delhi, welcoming this gesture, stressed it would provide “much-needed relief to over two million strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia”. In other important developments, India’s Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar attended the opening ceremony of the ‘FIFA World Cup 2022’ in Qatar on November 20. India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are likely to launch negotiations for a free trade agreement on November 24.

Boosting India-Israel anti-terror cooperation, the two sides conducted a joint security drill in New Delhi ensuring preparedness and contingency plans against future terrorist attacks. Further, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing ‘No Money for Terror’ conference, called for a “uniform, unified, and zero-tolerance” approach to terrorism.

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held a discussion with his Syrian counterpart Dr. Faisal Mekdad in New Delhi on November 18. Two leaders exchanged views on West Asia, the Ukraine conflict, Indo-Pacific, and the role of the UN. Dr. Jaishankar assured Syria of India’s continued humanitarian support, particularly, regarding medicines and artificial limbs.

Amidst the growing US-China strategic competition, Pentagon warned its key Middle East partners to limit their security cooperation with China. Diplomatic Adviser to the President of UAE Anwar Gargash, reacting to US advice maintained that “the UAE has no interest in choosing sides between great powers, [but], our primary strategic relationship remains unequivocally with the United States”.

To address regional security concerns, Washington reiterated that it is “actively building and enabling an integrated air and maritime defence architecture for the Middle East”. Meanwhile, the US remains sceptical of reports that Iran had developed a hypersonic missile. Amidst ongoing protests over women’s rights and Tehran’s drone sales to Russia, the US has shifted its focus away from reviving the Iran nuclear deal. In line with this, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) censured Iran over insufficient cooperation in the agency’s investigation into traces of uranium found at several undeclared sites in the country.

In response to last week’s terror attack in Istanbul, Turkey carried out airstrikes on Kurdish militant bases in northern Syria and northern Iraq. Amidst unabated

Ukraine conflict, CIA Director William Burns met his Russian counterpart Sergei Naryshkin in Turkey on November 14. Answering questions on the meeting, White House stressed that the CIA was not negotiating the end of war in Ukraine, but to message on the “consequences of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia” and the “risks of escalation of strategic stability”.

Among other regional developments, the US has granted immunity to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a case relating to the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

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

## Bahrain

### [India, GCC to Launch Free Trade Pact Negotiations on November 24](#)

November 17, 2022, The Economic Times

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are expected to launch negotiations for a free trade agreement on November 24 with an aim to boost economic ties between the two regions, an official said.

### [Top Pentagon Official Warns Middle East Partners To Limit China Ties](#)

November 18, 2022, Axios

The Pentagon's top policy official warned America's partners in the Middle East that cooperating too closely with Beijing on security issues could damage their cooperation with Washington.

### [US Building 'Air and Maritime Defense' System in Mideast to Deter 'Imminent Threats'](#)

November 20, 2022, The Times of Israel

"The United States is now actively building and enabling an integrated air and maritime defence architecture in this region," said McGurk, the top White House official on the Middle East.

### [Israeli President Herzog Plans First Visit to Bahrain](#)

November 17, 2022, Haaretz

Herzog is set to be the first-ever Israeli Head of State to travel to the Gulf Kingdom amid ongoing talks of a free trade agreement set to be finalised by the end of the year.

## Egypt

### [COP27: 'World Has Waited Far Long...', Says India on Compensation Fund Approval](#)

November 20, 2022, Mint

"The world has waited far too long for this," said India after the countries at the UN climate summit in Egypt agreed to secure an agreement on establishing a fund to address loss and damage due to climate change-induced disasters.

### [Key Takeaways from the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt](#)

November 21, 2022, Yahoo Finance

Some of the key takeaways from the two-week COP27 summit held in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh are listed in this report.

### [COP27: China's Climate Envoy Says Expects Cooperation with the U.S. to Continue](#)

November 19, 2022, Reuters

China's top climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua said he expects to continue direct cooperation on climate change with his U.S. counterpart John Kerry after the COP27 summit taking place in Egypt comes to a close.

### [US and Russia to Meet In Egypt To Discuss Key Nuclear Arms Control Agreement Later This Month](#)

November 18, 2022, CNN

Officials from the United States and Russia will meet in Egypt from November 29 to December 6 to discuss a key nuclear arms control agreement - New START Treaty.

## Iraq

### [Iraq FM Says Baghdad Wants to See Advances in Iran-US, Iran-Saudi Talks](#)

November 20, 2022, Tehran Times

"The dispute between Iran and the U.S. reflects on Iraqi land, in Iraqi politics, and in Iraqi culture. It is in our interest to help if we can or to encourage both parties to continue the negotiations in Vienna," FM Hussein told the Manama Dialogue conference in Bahrain.

### [Iraq to Participate in Arab-Chinese Summit in Saudi Arabia](#)

November 15, 2022, Iraqi News

The Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Hussein, met with the Chinese Ambassador to Iraq, where they discussed ways to strengthen the relations, and prospects to develop bilateral cooperation to benefit the people of both countries.



## Iran

### [US Skeptical of Reports Iran Has Developed Hypersonic Missile – Pentagon](#)

November 17, 2022, Arab News

The United States is sceptical of reports suggesting Iran had developed a hypersonic missile, a Pentagon spokesperson said.

### [No Push For Iran Nuclear Talks, U.S. Envoy Says, Due To Protests, Drone Sales](#)

November 14, 2022, Reuters

Iran's crackdown on protesters and the sale of drones to Russia have turned the United States' focus away from reviving a nuclear deal, which Tehran has so far rejected, Washington's special envoy for Iran said.

### [Tehran Agrees to Help Moscow Manufacture Explosive Drones in Russia – Report](#)

November 19, 2022, The Times of Israel

According to a report, Russia has reached a deal with Iran to begin manufacturing kamikaze drones on Russian soil, after long weeks of attacking Ukrainian cities with Iranian-made aircraft.

### [U.S. Imposes New Sanctions Over Iran Sanctions Evasion, Targets Chinese Firms](#)

November 17, 2022, Reuters

The United States imposed sanctions on over a dozen companies based in China, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates that Washington accused of facilitating the sale of Iranian petrochemicals and petroleum products to buyers in East Asia.

### [Iran Nuclear Chief Rejects Western Motion Calling For Cooperation with IAEA](#)

November 16, 2022, France 24

Iran said it rejected a draft resolution by Western nations calling on Tehran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

### [Demonstrators Set Fire to Khomeini's Home](#)

November 19, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Demonstrators in Iran set fire to the ancestral home of the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini, two months after the start of the anti-regime protest movement.

[Iranian Intelligence Tried to Kidnap or Assassinate Critics in the UK at least 10 Times, MI5 Says](#)

November 16, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran's intelligence services have made at least ten attempts to kidnap or assassinate figures they deem a threat within the United Kingdom, Britain's domestic intelligence chief has revealed.

[Russia: Not Reviving Nuclear Deal Will Have 'Irreversible Consequences'](#)

November 18, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Russia sees "no reasonable alternative" to the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and world powers, Russian deputy foreign minister Sergey Vershinin said.

## Israel

### [Israel, India Conduct Joint Security Drill in Delhi to Prepare Against Terror Attacks](#)

November 18, 2022, The Economic Times

The Embassy of Israel in India in collaboration with Indian security forces conducted their biggest joint security drill in New Delhi last week to ensure the preparedness and potency of contingency plans for any sort of terrorist attacks in the future.

### [Israel Accuses Iran of Drone Attack On Oil Tanker Off Oman Coast](#)

November 16, 2022, CNN

Israel accused Iran of launching a drone attack on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman, with one official describing it as “an Iranian provocation in the Gulf” linked to the World Cup in Qatar.

### [After Israeli-owned Tanker Hit, US to Deploy 100 Unmanned Vessels in the Persian Gulf](#)

November 19, 2022, The Times of Israel

A US-led task force will deploy over 100 unmanned vessels in the Gulf region’s strategic waters by next year to stave off maritime threats, the US Central Command chief said.

### [Ron Dermer, Said To Be Top Pick for Israeli FM, Heard Bashing Biden ‘Weakness’ on Iran](#)

November 18, 2022, The Times of Israel

Ron Dermer, a former Israeli Ambassador to the US, accused the White House of “project[ing] tremendous weakness,” “handcuffing Israel,” being “hellbent” on reaching a nuclear deal, and “wrong fundamentally strategically” by trying to negotiate in order to avoid an armed clash with Iran.

### [Israel Will Not Cooperate with FBI Inquiry Into Killing of Palestinian American Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh](#)

November 15, 2022, The Guardian

Israel’s defence minister, Benny Gantz, denounced the inquiry as “interference in Israel’s internal affairs” and said he “made it clear to the American representatives that we stand behind the IDF [Israel defence forces] soldiers, that we will not cooperate with any external investigation”.

[Israel Swears in Most Right-wing Knesset in History](#)

November 15, 2022, AL Arabiya

After nearly four years of political deadlock and five elections, Israel swore in the most right-wing parliament in its history on Tuesday (November 15). Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu is working to cobble together a far-right and religious governing coalition in the 120-seat Knesset.

[Netanyahu Coalition Deal With Extremists Will 'recognise' Settlement Outposts](#)

November 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israel's incoming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to a deal with far-right extremists which will see 65 settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank being recognised by the government. At the moment, all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law, and so-called outposts are even illegal under Israeli law.

[Hamas: Israel Coalition Gov't Deal Will Explode Situation](#)

November 18, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Hamas spokesperson, Hazem Qassem, said the Israeli right-wing parties' agreement on "legalising settlement outposts" in the occupied West Bank reflects the depth of racism and fascism that will rule in the next Israeli government.

## Jordan

### [Jordan, Israel Agree To Join in Saving River Jordan](#)

November 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israel and Jordan signed a declaration of intent to join together in conserving and protecting the River Jordan, as their shared waterway continues to steadily run dry.

## Kuwait

### [Indian Engineers in Kuwait Again Face Trouble In Visa Renewal](#)

November 17, 2022, The Economic Times

Indian engineers working in Kuwait are facing an issue in visa renewal again as the authorities there are once more insisting on a complex norm to complete that process.

## Lebanon

### [Hezbollah Transporting Hundreds of Chemical Weapons to Lebanon - Report](#)

November 20, 2022, The Jerusalem Post

Hezbollah is storing hundreds of missiles carrying a toxic chemical payload at a warehouse in Al Qusayr, near the Lebanese-Syrian border, the Saudi Al-Hadath news reported.

## Oman

### [US Pushes Oman To Follow Saudi Arabia in Allowing Israeli Flights To Use Airspace](#)

November 17, 2022, The Times of Israel

The Biden administration is pushing the Omani government to follow Saudi Arabia in allowing Israeli flights to use its airspace, in a move that would significantly shorten the distance for flights to the Far East.



## Qatar

[Indian Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Meets Qatar's Emir at the Opening Ceremony of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar](#)

November 20, 2022, Official Twitter Handle of Vice President of India

[The United States and Qatar: Strategic Partners Advancing Peace and Security](#)

November 20, 2022, U.S. Department of State

As Qatar prepared to host the FIFA Men's World Cup in 2022, the United States and Qatar committed to expanding close interagency cooperation to ensure a safe and successful tournament.

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## Saudi Arabia

### ['Much-needed relief': India on Saudi's Police Clearance Exemption For Visa](#)

November 18, 2022, Hindustan Times

The Indian mission in Saudi Arabia welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to exempt Indian nationals from submitting Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) to obtain a visa for travelling to the country. The embassy said that the exemption will provide much-needed relief to over 2 million Indian nationals living in Saudi Arabia.

### [Impose Cost On Nations Which Back Terror: PM Modi Targets Pakistan, China At NMFT Meet](#)

November 19, 2022, The Indian Express

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that while some countries support terrorism "as part of their foreign policy", others do so by "blocking action against terrorists". Asking the world to unite against such "overt and covert backing of terror", Modi said a "cost" must be imposed on such countries.

### [Saudi Crown Prince Meets Thai PM After Diplomatic Ties Restored](#)

November 18, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Thailand's Prime Minister met with Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, in Bangkok, signing agreements to expand diplomatic relations restored this year, more than three decades after Saudi Arabia downgraded ties over a jewellery theft.

### [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Attends Opening Ceremony of FIFA World Cup in Qatar](#)

November 20, 2022, Saudi Gazette

Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman attended the opening ceremony and match of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar on Sunday (November 20), along with other international leaders.

### [US Determines Saudi Crown Prince is Immune in Case Brought by Jamal Khashoggi's Fiancée](#)

November 18, 2022, CNN

The Biden administration has determined that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, should be granted immunity in a case brought against him by the fiancée of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, whom the administration has said was murdered at the prince's direction.

[In G20, Saudi Arabia Works For The Realization of Global Economic Stability](#)

November 14, 2022, Saudi Gazette

Thanks to its solid economic base, Saudi Arabia's admission to the G20 club, which gathers the world's major 20 economies, has effectively augmented the role it was playing in the global economy.

[EU Expects To Be Ready For Russia Oil Price Cap Dec. 5 Start – Officials](#)

November 18, 2022, Arab News

The EU expects to have its regulations completed in time for the introduction of a G7 plan to cap the price of Russian crude oil on Dec. 5, the organizations' energy policy chief said.

## Syria

### [India, Syria Talk IT, Pharma Tie-ups](#)

November 19, 2022, The Telegraph

Meeting for the second time in three months, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Fayssal Mekdad reviewed bilateral relations, including collaboration in the fertiliser, pharma and IT sectors, amid a five-year-old offer from Damascus for phosphate mining in its northwestern region.

### [Israeli Air Attacks In Syria Kill Four Soldiers, Wound One](#)

November 19, 2022, AL Jazeera

Four Syrian soldiers have been killed and one wounded by Israeli air strikes on military posts in the central and western regions of Syria, the Syrian state news agency SANA reported.

## Türkiye

### [Turkish Air Strikes Target Kurdish Militants In Syria, Iraq After Bomb Attack](#)

November 20, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Turkish warplanes carried out air strikes on Kurdish militant bases in northern Syria and northern Iraq, destroying 89 targets, Turkey's defence ministry said, in retaliation for a bomb attack in Istanbul that killed six people one week ago.

### [Ukraine War: US and Russian Spy Chiefs Meet Face-To-Face in Turkey](#)

November 14, 2022, BBC News

US and Russian spy chiefs have met face-to-face to discuss Moscow's nuclear threat in Ukraine and American prisoners held "unjustly" by Russia. The discussions between CIA Director William Burns and his counterpart Sergei Naryshkin took place in the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Monday (November 14).

## UAE

### [Abu Dhabi Space Debate To Advance Dialogue On Global Space Economy: India A Key 'Vibrant Voice', Says UAE](#)

November 20, 2022, Moneycontrol

The Abu Dhabi Space Debate (ASDS), scheduled to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) capital on December 5-6, is aimed at advancing the dialogue on global space economy, and India is one of the key "vibrant" voices in the discussion, a top Emirati official said.

### [US Partners In The Middle East Avoid Taking Sides Against China](#)

November 18, 2022, AL-Monitor

Anwar Gargash, Diplomatic Advisor to UAE President Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said this week that while "the UAE has no interest in choosing sides between great powers, our primary strategic relationship remains unequivocally with the United States."

## Yemen

### [US Navy, Coast Guard Intercept Boat with 180 Tons of Iranian Explosive Material Headed to Yemen](#)

November 15, 2022, NBC News

The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard intercepted an enormous Iranian shipment of explosive materials headed to Yemen last week, according to a statement from U.S. Central Command.



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