



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



Volume IV, Issue 51 | December 19, 2022

Delhi Policy Group

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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

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar addressed UN Security Council on 'Global Counter-Terrorism Approach: Challenges and Way Forward' on December 15. During his address he underscored that "accountability must be the bedrock of counter-terrorism", while highlighting specific challenges for the counter-terrorism architecture that include "terror financing and state culpability", "integrity and accountability of counter-terror multilateral mechanism", "double standards leading to concerns of politicization", and "countering the misuse of new and emerging technologies by terrorists".

As part of deepening of India-UAE partnership, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar addressed 'India Global Forum' in Abu Dhabi on December 12. Dr. Jaishankar shed light on the relationship between "globalization", "rebalancing, and multipolarity" adding that "far from witnessing an end of history, we are seeing a return of history" calling on India and UAE to play a key role in shaping the global order.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended "Hanukkah" greetings to Israel's Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu. PM-designate Netanyahu is planning a visit to India in 2023. Meanwhile, amidst anti-Hijab protests in Iran, India abstained from a resolution calling for the removal of Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua met Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on December 13. Iran expressed strong dissatisfaction over the China-GCC joint statement that called for negotiations between UAE and Iran to resolve territorial disputes over the strategically important islands of 'Abu Musa' and 'Greater and Lesser Tunbs' in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran maintained that its claim over the islands is non-negotiable, while, the UAE claims that Tehran's control of the islands violates international law.

CIA Director William Burns pointing toward an emerging "full-fledged defence partnership" between Russia and Iran warned that it "poses a real threat" to the U.S. allies in the Middle East. Responding to this, Iran asserted that it "acts independently in its foreign relations" and will not "seek permission from anyone" to expand relations with Russia.

On the energy front, OPEC sees robust growth for crude demand in 2023 as China relaxes its zero-covid policy. Meanwhile, Russia replaced Iraq as India's top crude supplier in November 2022.

Among other regional developments, Israel's PM-designate Benjamin Netanyahu in an interview with Saudi broadcaster Al Arabiya asserted that the normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia is key to peace between Israel and Palestine. Netanyahu called upon President Biden to "reaffirm the US's traditional alliance with Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East as Washington is the anchor of stability in the region".

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

Bahrain

[Long-Live India-Bahrain Friendship](#)

December 16, 2022, The Daily Tribune - News of Bahrain

On the occasion of Bahrain's 51st National Day, Indian Ambassador writes about India-Bahrain bilateral relations.

[Blossoming Bahrain-Israel Ties on Display as Arab State Fetes Its National Day in Tel Aviv](#)

December 15, 2022, Jewish News Syndicate

The deepening peace and collaboration between Israel and its new Arab allies as a result of the Abraham Accords was evident in Tel Aviv, at an event hosted by Bahrain's Embassy in Israel at the Hilton Grand Ballroom to celebrate Bahrain National Day.

[Russia in Talks With Gulf States on Visa-Free System](#)

December 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Russia is currently talking with the Gulf States and a number of Asian countries about the visa-free system, TASS reported Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Ivanov saying.

Egypt

[Egypt's New IMF Deal Aims To Reduce Government Debt: Cabinet](#)

December 18, 2022, Arab News

The International Monetary Fund's new \$3 billion financial support package for Egypt aims to reduce government debt to less than 80 percent of the gross domestic product in the medium term.

[Top Russian, Egyptian Diplomats Discuss Bilateral, International Issues](#)

December 18, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Sergey Lavrov and Sameh Shoukry exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. They affirmed mutual interest in strengthening cooperation on topical international and regional issues, including in the UN, it added.

[Egypt Making 'Huge Fortune' Selling Israeli Gas To Europe, Media Says](#)

December 13, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Israeli media outlets have criticised the "huge fortune" accumulated by Egypt from exporting Israeli natural gas to Europe at a price that is at least three times higher than the price it pays to Israel.

[UN Security Council Examines Rising Terrorism Threat Globally](#)

December 15, 2022, UN News

A UN Security Council meeting on Thursday (December 15) focused on terrorism began with a sobering reminder of the danger posed by this persistent threat to international peace.

[India Launches 'Group of Friends' To Promote Accountability For Crimes Against Peacekeepers](#)

December 16, 2022, Outlook India

India, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Morocco and Nepal are co-chairs of the 'Group of Friends to Promote Accountability for Crimes Against Peacekeepers' launched during India's current presidency of the UN Security Council.

Iraq

[OPEC Sees Robust Global Oil Demand Growth In 2023 After 2022 Chinese Contraction](#)

December 13, 2022, Reuters

OPEC said it expected to see robust global oil demand growth in 2023 with potential economic upside coming from a relaxation of China's zero-COVID policies, which this year has pushed the country's oil use into contraction for the first time in years.

[India To Engage With All Countries in Energy Sector, Including Russia: Hardeep Singh Puri](#)

December 16, 2022, Moneycontrol

"We look forward to more comprehensive and intensified engagement with all countries in the sector of energy, including Russia," Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said at the Curtain Raiser event of India Energy Week (IEW).

[Russia Replaces Iraq as Top Oil Supplier To India in November](#)

December 14, 2022, The Economic Times

Russia has for the first time emerged as the top oil supplier to India replacing Iraq as refiners last month snapped up oil from Moscow fearing a price cap from Dec. 5 could hit supplies and choke payment avenues, data obtained from trade sources showed.

[Russia Says Urals Oil Price Averaged \\$57.49/Barrel](#)

December 16, 2022, The Economic Times

The average price for Russia's Urals oil blend averaged USD 57.49 per barrel between Nov 15 and December 14, a price below the Western cap of \$60.

[US Names Assault Ship After Iraq Battle That Killed Hundreds of Iraqi Civilians](#)

December 16, 2022, Middle East Eye

The US Navy is naming a future helicopter assault ship the 'USS Fallujah', after two of the bloodiest battles of the Iraq War which saw heavy civilian and US casualties.

Iran

[India Abstains From Vote To Remove Iran From UN Women's Commission](#)

December 15, 2022, India Today

India has abstained from voting to remove Iran from a United Nations women's commission over a crackdown on anti-hijab protests. A total of 16 nations abstained from the vote, including India, but Iran was ousted as 29 countries stood in favour of the resolution.

[Xi's China-Arab Summit Success In Riyadh Raises Temperatures In Iran](#)

December 14, 2022, South China Morning Post

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has "seriously demanded compensation" for his country over last week's meetings between Arab leaders and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Riyadh.

[CIA head: Russia Looking To Support Iran, Posing Threat To US Allies in the Middle East](#)

December 17, 2022, The Times of Israel

CIA Director William Burns says the start of a 'full-fledged defence partnership' between Tehran and Moscow already has an effect in Ukraine, could have 'an even more dangerous impact on the Middle East'.

[Iran Won't 'Seek Permission' To Boost Russia Ties, Rejecting US Alarm](#)

December 18, 2022, The Times of Israel

Iran's Foreign Ministry said it would not "seek permission from anyone" to expand relations with Russia, dismissing US concerns over a growing military partnership between Tehran and Moscow.

[Ahead of IAEA Visit, Iran Says Uranium Enrichment Capacity Doubled](#)

December 18, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Iran's nuclear agency chief says the country's capacity to enrich uranium has more than doubled "in its entire history", crediting it to a bill passed two years ago.

[CIA Chief Says PM Modi's Concern On Nuclear War Has Had An Impact on Russia](#)

December 18, 2022, Mint

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi in India raising concerns about the use of nuclear weapons is having an impact on Russia, Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) said during an interview with PBS, regarding the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Israel

[PM-designate Benjamin Netanyahu to Visit India In 2023, Says Israeli Ambassador Naor Gilon](#)

December 17, 2022, WION

Israel's Ambassador to India Naor Gilon has said Benjamin Netanyahu, who is Israel's PM-designate, will be visiting India next year once he takes charge. India and Israel are celebrating 30 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties and a Prime Ministerial visit is something that has been considered.

[PM Modi Extends Hanukkah Festival Greetings to Israel](#)

December 18, 2022, Outlook India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Benjamin Netanyahu and those celebrating the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. Netanyahu is the prime minister-elect of Israel.

[Netanyahu's Extremist Allies, Settlements and Pride Parades: U.S. Ambassador on Israel's Radical New Coalition](#)

December 18, 2022, Haaretz

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides says that the incoming PM has a 'very good' relationship with Biden, that the U.S. will oppose legalisation of outposts and changing the Temple Mount status quo, and reiterated that the U.S. will continue to 'have Israel's back... we need to keep people calm and judge this government on its actions'.

[The Ideal of Democracy in a Jewish State Is in Jeopardy](#)

December 17, 2022, The New York Times (Editorial)

[Benjamin Netanyahu Rejects New York Times's Editorial on Israeli Democracy](#)

December 19, 2022, Official Twitter Account - Benjamin Netanyahu

[Benjamin Netanyahu: 'Palestinians Can Get Autonomy Without Sovereignty or Security'](#)

December 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

"The only peace that will hold is one that we can defend," Netanyahu told the US radio station. "And the one that we can defend is one in which the Palestinians have all the powers to govern themselves, but none of the powers to threaten our lives."

[Mossad Head Reveals How Syria Found Eli Cohen, Discloses Spy's Final Message](#)

December 12, 2022, The Times of Israel

Mossad chief David Barnea revealed the last message sent out by Israeli spy Eli Cohen on the day of his capture in Syria, along with new information on what led to his arrest.

Jordan

[Police Officer Killed In Jordan As Anger Over Fuel Prices Spreads](#)

December 16, 2022, AL Jazeera

One senior police officer has been killed in clashes with demonstrators in the southern Jordanian city of Maan during protests over high fuel prices that spread to several cities across the kingdom, police and witnesses said.

Kuwait

[U.S., Iraq, and Kuwait Conduct 2nd Joint Patrol in Arabian Gulf](#)

December 12, 2022, Official Website of America's Navy

Maritime forces from Iraq, Kuwait and the United States completed a joint patrol in the Arabian Gulf, Dec. 11, representing the second time in four months the three nations sailed together to promote regional maritime security.

Lebanon

[Israel Could Strike In Lebanon If Iran Renews Weapons Smuggling](#)

December 16, 2022, AL Monitor

Israel's security system is concerned over attempts by Tehran to smuggle weapons to Hezbollah in Beirut via civilian flights from Tehran, a senior Israeli intelligence official said.

[Lebanon: 90 Percent Syrian refugees Need Humanitarian Aid to Survive](#)

December 17, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Ninety percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon need humanitarian assistance to survive during the worst economic crisis the country has witnessed in decades, according to announcements made by international organisations.

Oman

[Oman Has Largest Green Hydrogen Project Pipeline In Middle East Region: IEA](#)

December 14, 2022, Muscut Daily

With an ambitious target of exporting one million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030, Oman has the largest low-emission hydrogen project pipeline in the Middle East region, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Qatar

[Qatar 2022: The 'Free Palestine' World Cup](#)

December 18, 2022, Middle East Monitor

Although Palestinians had no official presence at the Qatar 2022 World Cup, the Palestinian flag was impossible to avoid, flown in the streets, waved in the stadiums and draped on the shoulders of some of football's biggest stars. As Palestine's Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour remarked, 'the winner of this World Cup is already known. It is Palestine.'

Saudi Arabia

[India's Rupee Settlement Mechanism Draws Interest from More Nations](#)

December 16, 2022, Reuters

India's rupee trade settlement mechanism, a means of using rupees instead of dollars and other big currencies for international transactions, is attracting interest from more countries.

[Benjamin Netanyahu Takes To Saudi Arabia's AL Arabiya To Push For Normalisation With Israel](#)

December 16, 2022, Middle East Eye

Benjamin Netanyahu has taken to Saudi Arabian state television to claim that normalisation with Riyadh is key to peace between Israel and Palestine.

[Saudi FM Says 'All Bets Are Off' If Iran Makes a Nuclear Weapon](#)

December 12, 2022, The Times of Israel

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said that the Islamic Republic's Gulf neighbours will not sit by if Tehran produces nuclear weapons.

Syria

[IDF Chief Confirms Israel Behind Strike On Iran Arms Convoy Near Syria-Iraq Border](#)

December 14, 2022, The Times of Israel

IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi confirmed that an airstrike in early November 2022 on a convoy allegedly carrying Iranian arms near the Syria-Iraq border was carried out by the Israeli Air Force.

[US Forces Prepare To Build 1st Military Base In Syria's Raqqa](#)

December 16, 2022, Mehr News Agency

The London-based Syrian Observatory For Human Rights (SOHR) has reported on its website that the US forces are preparing for announcing their first military base in Al-Raqqa, after having withdrawn from the province over three years, during "peace Spring" operation in 2019.

[Syria: \\$26bn in Losses Due To US Presence](#)

December 15, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed that Syria has incurred \$25.9 billion in direct losses due to the American forces' attacks on its territory, including \$19.8 billion worth of stolen oil and gas.

Türkiye

[Nine Hurt In Bomb Blast In Southeast Turkey](#)

December 16, 2022, Times Now

A bomb hit an armoured police van in south-eastern Turkey on Friday (December 16), injuring nine people and reviving fears of new unrest in the mainly Kurdish region.

[Russia Welcomes President Erdoğan's Call for Trilateral Syria Diplomacy](#)

December 16, 2022, Daily Sabah

Moscow welcomed President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's proposal to establish a three-way mechanism for diplomacy between Türkiye, Russia, and Syria.

[Turkey Slams EU's Criticism of Its Trade Ties With Russia](#)

December 15, 2022, Middle East Monitor

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticised the conclusions issued by the European Union's General Affairs Council regarding Ankara's trade relations with Russia as well as the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus.

UAE

[India, UAE Discuss Future Cooperation In BRICS, SCO Framework; Iran FM Speaks With Jaishankar](#)

December 14, 2022, The Economic Times

India and UAE have discussed possibilities of future cooperation within the framework of BRICS and SCO during the visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to UAE on Monday (December 12).

[India, UAE To Play Key Role In Re-Shaping Global Order: EAM S Jaishankar](#)

December 13, 2022, The Economic Times

In his address at the inauguration of the India Global Forum UAE 2022, Jaishankar said India and the Gulf state are two ancient civilisations that have co-existed for centuries and are now re-discovering old ties.

Yemen

[White House Defends Support for Saudis in Yemen War](#)

December 16, 2022, Voice of America

The White House defended its decision to block a war powers resolution in the Senate that would have ended U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, saying it would have impeded delicate diplomatic talks.



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