



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

WEST ASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News Items from West Asia

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Israel, Lebanon sign US-brokered maritime border deal

Israel and Lebanon officially signed a US-brokered maritime deal on October 28, 2022. The deal was signed separately by Lebanese President, Michel Aoun, in Beirut and Israeli Prime Minister, Yair Lapid, in Jerusalem. The deal gives Israel full rights to explore the Karish field while Lebanon received rights over Qana fields, while, agreeing to share the royalty with Israel. The agreement, for the first time, demarcated Lebanese and Israeli waters by Line 23. The agreement is important as it has led to a positive beginning in Israel's relations with Lebanon. It is also expected to prevent any immediate confrontation between Israel and Hezbollah.

President of Lebanon resigns

The political crisis in Lebanon has further deepened after President Michel Aoun resigned on October 30, 2022. He left office at a time when no agreement had been made on his replacement as the divided parliament failed to elect a successor. In the farewell speech, he lashed the country's judiciary and Central Bank Governor, Riad Salameh, and blamed Prime Minister Najib Mikati for not being able to form the government. He also said that the country requires immediate reforms to get rid of powerful political elites who paralysed the judiciary and created obstacles in the Beirut blast investigation.

Iraqi parliament approves new government

After facing more than a year-long political stalemate, the Iraqi parliament finally

approved a new government led by Mohammed Shia Al Sudani. He was nominated on October 13 and had the support of the Coalition for the Administration of the State, an alliance of pro-Iran Shia factions that holds 138 seats in the 329-members parliament. Since 2005, Al Sudani's cabinet has been the first one to not include the seats of the bloc of influential Shiite cleric Muqtada Al Sadr. Al Sudani has said that the new government will combat the "epidemic of corruption" which has weakened the economy and promised to find a "sustainable solution of the outstanding issues with Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government" through partnership.

King Abdullah of Jordan visits Oman

The Jordanian King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein visited Oman on October 3, 2022, and met with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman. During the visit, the two leaders discussed ways to find political solutions to the regional crises. Both agreed to support economic diversification, private sector partnership and commercial exchange. They also discussed the Palestinian issues and affirmed support for the Palestinian people. To deepen the ties between the two countries, the leaders signed MoU, agreements, and executive programmes in various fields such as "industry, mining, labour, competition protection, prohibition of monopoly, archiving, higher education, scholarly research, innovation, consumer protection, tourism and insurance."

Palestinian groups meet in Algeria

To discuss the proposal for reconciliation and national unity, Hamas, Fatah and 12

other Palestinian groups met in Algeria on October 11, 2022. The rival Palestinian factions have agreed on a reconciliation deal which focuses on ending 15-years long dissonance by new elections. According to Aljazeera, the agreement was signed by Azzam Al Ahmad (Fatah), Ismail Haniya (chief of the Hamas political bureau) and Talal Naji (Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and all the groups agreed on holding legislative and presidential elections within one year.

Russia proposes to develop a gas hub in Turkey

Russian President Vladimir Putin during his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Kazakhstan has proposed to develop a “gas hub” in Turkey amidst disruptions in Russian supplies to Europe due to sanctions. Putin claimed Turkey to be a reliable route for gas supply, especially to Europe. Putin stated that the gas hub would not only serve as a platform for deliveries but also as a regulator of prices. Putin proposed to export more gas via the TurkStream gas pipeline, which serves as the best route for redirecting gas supplies to the EU after the Nord Stream pipeline leaks.

OPEC+ countries decide to make two million b/d production cuts

The 45th meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) and the 33rd OPEC+ Ministerial Meeting in Vienna have decided to make a two million b/d

production cut from the August production levels, the biggest cut since the Covid pandemic. This decision was met with an animus response from the US, which described the move to be “short-sighted.” Biden vowed to impose unspecified “consequences” on Saudi Arabia, marking the widening rift between the two countries. Russia, on the other hand, praised OPEC+ for the decision, stating it as “balanced and thoughtful.”

External Affairs Minister visits Egypt

External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Egypt and met with Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. Both the leaders discussed bilateral cooperation on issue such as defence and security cooperation, trade and investment, air connectivity, tourism education and health sector.

During the visit, Dr. Jaishankar met with the Indian community in Egypt and addressed a gathering of the Egyptian and Indian business community. Both leaders had met on the side-line of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September and discussed to strengthen the cooperation in the field of defence, education and in green hydrogen. Indeed, Dr Jaishankar’s visit provided an opportunity to review bilateral and multilateral ties between the countries.