



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 launches operation against Palestinian Islamic Jihad

The Israeli armed forces launched “Operation Breaking Dawn” against the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) on August 5, 2022, in retaliation to a large number of rockets fired into Israeli territories by the PIJ. Israeli air strikes killed at least 49 Palestinians and injured hundreds of people, including key leaders of PIJ such as Tayseer Jabari and Khaled Mansour, Commander of Southern Area. The Operation was concluded with a truce reached by both parties negotiated by Egypt on August 7, 2022. However, it was reported that a few days after the truce, tensions between Israel and Egypt started since Israel declined to rein in its raids in the areas of West Bank. According to media reports, Egypt had differences with Israel over the issue of handling of the operations in the Gaza Strip and the killing of Palestinian activist Ibrahim Al Nabulsi. Nabulsi and two other Palestinians were killed in a raid conducted by Israel Defence Forces a day after the ceasefire agreement was brokered between Israel and PIJ to end Operation in Gaza.

Egypt hosts mini-Arab summit

The leaders of the UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq met in a mini-Arab Summit hosted by Egypt on August 23, 2022, and discussed important regional and international issues. During the meeting, the leaders discussed deepening ties in areas of economy, investment, food security and energy. The Summit emphasised boosting the stability and prosperity in the region. King Abdullah of

Jordan stressed on relaunching the Israel-Palestine peace process based on a two-state solution. In addition, the conflict in Yemen, Syria and Libya as well as the latest Israel-Gaza clashes were also discussed in the meeting.

Violent protests erupt in Iraq

Violent protests erupted in Bagdad after Shia leader Muqtada Al Sadr announced to resign from Iraqi politics. Sadr’s announcement prompted his followers to storm the government palace and sparked clashes with security forces which took the lives of 30 people and injured more than a hundred. Furthermore, after the clashes, Sadr announced to go on a hunger strike if the violence did not end. Political instability continues in Iraq as the country has struggled to form a new government since the parliamentary elections were held in October last year. Although the Sadrists won the largest number of seats in the parliament, their attempts to form a government have not been successful amid opposition from rival political blocs. This has resulted in an unending spate of violence and instability in the country. Following these protests, Iran has closed its land borders with Iraq and the regional countries have appealed to the Iraqi political factions to unite and resort to peaceful means to resolve the crisis.

Türkiye and Israel restore full diplomatic relations

Türkiye and Israel decided to restore full diplomatic relations between them on August 16, 2022. Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid issued a statement following a

conversation with Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in which he said that restoring the relations with Türkiye is important for regional stability and for the people of Israel. The restoration of relations was an outcome of positive efforts that started after President Isaac Herzog's visit to Ankara. Restoration of full diplomatic relations between the two countries will contribute to expanding the economic ties between the two countries as well as contribute to establishing stability in the region.

Putin meets Erdogan in Sochi

Russian President Vladimir Putin met with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Sochi on August 5, 2022. The meeting discussed the Syrian crisis and issues related to international and regional security. While talking to the media prior to the meeting, Erdoğan highlighted the importance of Russia in fighting against terrorism and stated that their talks will help them take stronger steps to counter terror. On the other hand, President Putin expressed his gratitude to Erdogan for securing an international deal that helped resume the export of grains from Ukraine. He also said that both countries can contribute to "normalising the situation in Syria."

Fierce clashes erupt in Tripoli

Violent clashes were witnessed in Tripoli as supporters of different factions indulged in fighting on August 27, 2022. The clashes were reported as the worst in two years and are an indication of the return to the fragile political and security environment of the

past years. Around 23 people were killed and 87 injured in the clashes. The Tripoli-based Government of National Unity and the rival government accused each other responsible for the clashes. According to reports, the conflict sparked after one of the main groups in Tripoli attacked a base controlled by the other, resulting in hours-long clashes between the two.

Kuwait and the UAE restore diplomatic relations with Iran

Kuwait has restored its relationship with Iran and appointed Bader Abdullah Al Munaikh as its ambassador to Tehran. The UAE has also announced that its envoy to Iran will resume the duties very soon. Kuwait and the UAE had downgraded their ties with Iran in 2016 after Iranian demonstrators attacked the Saudi consulate in Mashhad. Both the countries have decided to restore their relationship with Iran as the situation in the Gulf is changing and several rounds of talks have been held between Saudi Arabia and Iran that are facilitated by Iraq.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH visits Iran and the UAE

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal was on a three days official visit to Iran and the UAE. During the visit, he met with the Vice President of Iran, Mohammad Mokhber, and discussed ways to foster India-Iran bilateral relations. Sonowal visited the Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar and handed over six mobile harbour cranes to Indian Ports Global

Chabahar Free Trade Zone (IPGCFTZ). In addition, an MoU concerning Mutual Recognition of Seafarer's Certificates of Competency in Unlimited Voyages between the countries was also signed between the two countries. Sonowal also met with Ali Akbar Safaee, the Deputy Minister and Managing Director of Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran and discussed the issue of maritime and port cooperation between the two countries. Sonowal said that India is committed to "develop & popularise Chabahar Port" and promoting "close cooperation to make Chabahar Port a regional trade, transit & connectivity hub as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi." In the UAE, he visited Jebel Ali Port and had a round table with the heads of Shipping/Freight companies.

India and Oman conducted a joint military exercise

Indian and Omani Armed forces concluded their fourth Joint Military Exercise "Ex-Al Najah-IV" at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan on August 13, 2022. The exercise was aimed at achieving interoperability in order to acquaint "the forces with each other's operational procedures and combat drills in a counter-terrorism environment under the UN mandate." From India, a contingent of the 18th Battalion of Mechanised Infantry Regiment participated in the exercise while Oman was represented by its Parachute Regiment. Various kinds of activities were conducted in the exercise in three phases. The first phase aimed at familiarising the forces with each other's weapons,

equipment and tactical drills. During the second phase, combat conditioning along with formulation and practice of joint drills was carried out. In the last phase validation exercise of key drills and concepts learnt during the first two phases was conducted.

Yemen ceasefire extended for another two months

The ceasefire in Yemen between the Houthis and the government in place since April this year has been extended for another two months, through October 2, 2022. The Houthis, on their part, have stated their commitment to intensify negotiation and reach an expanded agreement. Meanwhile, the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, has shared a proposal for an expanded deal with the parties that include a mechanism for the regular payment of salaries and pensions, opening of roads in Taiz and other governorates, opening additional destinations to and from the Sanaa airport and providing fuel to the Hudaydah port. Grundberg stated that "an expanded agreement would also provide an opportunity to negotiate a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic issues, and to prepare for the resumption of the Yemeni-led political process under UN auspices to reach a sustainable and just peace."