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WEST ASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News Items from West Asia

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Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza Peace Plan

On 29 September 2025, US President Donald Trump unveiled a 20-point Gaza Peace Plan alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, aiming to end the Gaza war, ensure Israel's withdrawal, and establish a demilitarised Gaza under international supervision. The plan mandates the return of 48 hostages (20 living and 28 deceased), in exchange for 1,950 Palestinian prisoners, resumption of aid, and amnesty for Hamas members renouncing violence. Governance would be handled by a technocratic Palestinian committee under an international "Board of Peace" chaired by Trump. An International Stabilisation Force (ISF) of US, Arab, and international partners would verify demilitarisation and oversee Israeli withdrawal. The plan envisions reconstruction through a special economic zone and a pathway to Palestinian statehood. Following the 10 October ceasefire, Israel began a partial withdrawal and released around 1950 Palestinian prisoners, while Hamas released all 20 living hostages and 15 dead bodies so far.

On 13 October, Trump addressed the Israeli Knesset after the release of the hostages, declaring a "new dawn in the Middle East". On 14 October, leaders and representatives from over 30 countries gathered in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to discuss a comprehensive path toward peace and reconstruction in Gaza. Trump, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani formally signed "The Trump Declaration

for Enduring Peace and Prosperity". Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh attended the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit. India expressed its support for the Gaza peace plan, appreciated the roles of Egypt and Qatar in advancing the path to peace, and reiterated its stance on a negotiated two-state solution.

Developments in Gaza

Despite the ceasefire that took effect on 10 October 2025, Gaza has remained volatile, with over 100 Palestinians killed and 230 wounded in Israeli attacks. The 19 October Rafah clashes marked the first major breach of the truce, killing two Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers and triggering Israeli air and artillery strikes. On 25 October, Israeli warplanes targeted a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative in Nuseirat Camp. Tensions intensified on 27–28 October after Israel accused Hamas of faking a hostage handover and launched renewed strikes on Rafah. One IDF reservist was killed by Palestinian operatives near the Israeli-controlled Yellow Line. Hamas denied any provocation, accusing Israel of violating the ceasefire.

On 13 October, Türkiye sent its first aid convoy – 17 trucks of food and three of tents and blankets – via Egypt's Karem Abu Salem crossing, joined by relief efforts from Egypt, Qatar, Jordan and the UAE. However, 81 Turkish disaster experts remain stalled at the border awaiting Israeli clearance. The US-led Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) was inaugurated in Kiryat Gat on 17 October to oversee aid coordination and stabilisation efforts amid the fragile truce.

Türkiye and the UK sign £8 billion deal for 20 Eurofighter Jets

On 27 October 2025, Türkiye and the United Kingdom signed an agreement worth £8 billion (\$10.7 billion) in Ankara for the sale of 20 Eurofighter Typhoon jets, marking the first new UK order since 2017. The deal was finalised during British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's first official visit to Türkiye and aims to enhance Türkiye's air capabilities while deepening defence and economic cooperation. Starmer said the partnership "bolsters NATO security" and supports 20,000 British jobs, while Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hailed it as "a new symbol of strategic alliance."

India-Egypt Strategic Dialogue

The first round of the India-Egypt Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 16 October 2025, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Badr Abdelatty. The dialogue was built on the strategic partnership launched during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Egypt in June 2023. Discussions covered a wide spectrum of cooperation, including defence collaboration, economic and trade partnerships, building innovation ecosystems, digital public infrastructure, green energy initiatives, start-ups, cyber technologies, AI and space. Both sides emphasised enhanced cooperation in counterterrorism, intelligence sharing, and South-South collaboration. Dr. Abdelatty also reviewed Egypt's economic reforms and invited Indian investment in the Suez Canal Economic Zone. During his visit,

Dr. Abdelatty called on Prime Minister Modi, who commended Egypt's pivotal role in promoting peace, particularly in Gaza, and expressed satisfaction with the expanding partnership in defence, technology and energy sectors.

Israel attacks Houthi and Hezbollah targets

On 16 October 2025, Yemen's Houthis announced the death of their Chief of Staff, Muhammad Abd Al Karim Al Ghamari, by an Israeli airstrike. The strike, which followed similar attacks in August 2025 targeting senior Houthi officials in Sanaa, marked an escalation in Israel's regional operations amid a fragile Gaza ceasefire. The Houthis vowed retaliation, denouncing "brutal" Israeli aggression and pledging to continue resistance.

In October 2025, Israeli air and drone strikes in Lebanon killed at least 20 Hezbollah operatives, including Hassan Atwi, Mahmoud Ali Issa, as well as Radwan Force commanders Zain Al Abidin Hussein Fatouni and Mohammad Akram Arabia. The operations targeted key figures involved in weapons procurement, smuggling, and reconstruction of military infrastructure, aiming to degrade Hezbollah's post-ceasefire capabilities and logistical networks.

PKK announces withdrawal of armed units from Türkiye to Iraq

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has announced that its armed elements within Türkiye's borders had begun withdrawing to northern Iraq, marking a key stage in

Ankara's "Terror-Free Türkiye" initiative. The declaration was made during a press statement in the foothills of Mount Qandil near Sulaymaniyah, where a senior PKK figure read a message citing decisions taken at a congress in May 2025 under the direction of jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan. The statement confirmed that the group had resolved to end its armed presence and activities in Türkiye, with 23 PKK militants reportedly having already crossed into Iraq. The move follows the July 2025 destruction of weapons by PKK members, an act hailed by Türkiye as "an irreversible turning point." The PKK, designated a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the United States, and the European Union, has conducted a violent insurgency since the 1980s, resulting in thousands of deaths.

Erdogan visits Kuwait, Qatar and Oman

On 24 October 2025, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan concluded a three-day Gulf tour covering Kuwait, Qatar and Oman, during which 24 agreements, MoUs and joint statements were signed to deepen cooperation in trade, defence, energy and investment. The visit, held from 21 to 23 October at the invitation of Gulf leaders, also focused on regional stability and the Gaza conflict. In Kuwait, Erdogan and Emir Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah signed maritime, energy and investment accords. In Qatar, he co-chaired the 11th Türkiye–Qatar High Strategic Committee Meeting with Emir Sheikh Tamim, expanding ties through MoUs on strategic development planning, defence industry cooperation, the strategic committee and

trade. In Oman, Erdogan met Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and finalised wide-ranging agreements in the defence industry, military, mining, science and technology, and media, along with visa exemptions and the creation of a Coordination Council. The tour underscored Türkiye's aim to strengthen Gulf partnerships.

Ahmed Al Sharaa visits Moscow

On 15 October 2025, Syria's interim President, Ahmed Al Sharaa, made his first official visit to Moscow, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The discussions focused on the political, economic, and humanitarian aspects of Russian-Syrian relations, as well as recent developments in the West Asia region. Putin praised the "special relationship" built between Russia and Syria over the past decades, noting several "important and useful initiatives" on the agenda. Al Sharaa expressed his desire to rebuild Syria's foreign relations, emphasising that this effort would focus "chiefly on Russia." Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that the talks covered the status of Russian military bases in Syria, following remarks by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on 13 October indicating that Damascus plans to maintain Russia's military presence under new conditions. The visit marked a continuation of high-level engagements between Moscow and Damascus since the change of power in Syria in late 2024, with previous meetings in February and July 2025 reaffirming Russia's support for Syria's unity, sovereignty and stability amid ongoing regional shifts.