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WEST ASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News Items from West Asia

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Trump's 20-point peace plan to end Gaza War

On 29 September 2025, US President Donald Trump proposed a 20-point Gaza peace plan. Trump, following a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, declared Washington was “beyond very close” to a deal after Israel’s acceptance, asking Hamas to follow suit. The plan calls for an immediate ceasefire, staged Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and release of all hostages within 72 hours in exchange for prisoner releases. It outlines demilitarisation of the Gaza Strip, destruction of Hamas’ military infrastructure and creation of a technocratic transitional authority overseen by an international “Board of Peace”. A US-led International Stabilisation Force will secure borders and support the Palestinian police force. The plan also promises large-scale aid, reconstruction, economic zones and governance reforms leading to potential Palestinian statehood. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE, Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Indonesia and Pakistan welcomed the initiative and pledged cooperation. India has also expressed its support for Trump’s peace plan.

Israeli strike in Qatar

On 9 September 2025, Israel launched an airstrike targeting Hamas leaders in Doha, killing at least six people, including the son of Hamas leader Khalil Al Hayya, as well as a Qatari security officer. Hamas confirmed its leadership survived the assassination attempt. Israel claimed responsibility, saying the leaders targeted were behind the 7 October 2023 attacks, describing it as a response to the Jerusalem

shooting on 8 September, killing six Israelis by two Palestinian gunmen. Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim condemned the strike as a “reckless criminal attack” and violation of sovereignty, while Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed called it “state terrorism” and vowed legal action. In the aftermath of the attack, on 14 and 15 September 2025, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Israel, meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog to discuss the Gaza war, the release of hostages, the US-Israeli alliance and the Qatar airstrike. Rubio, during his visit to Qatar on 16 September 2025, stressed the need to reinforce the US-Qatar security partnership, expressed support for Qatar’s mediation in the Gaza conflict, and pressed for a ceasefire and the release of hostages.

Arab-Islamic Summit takes place in Qatar

On 15 September 2025, leaders of the League of Arab States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) convened an emergency summit in Doha to address Israel’s attack on Qatar. Chaired by Qatar’s Amir Sheikh Tamim, the summit strongly condemned the 9 September Israeli strike on Qatari territory, describing it as a blatant violation of sovereignty and international law. The leaders reaffirmed solidarity with Qatar, declaring that aggression against it constitutes an attack on all Arab and Islamic states. The communiqué called for increased international accountability for Israel, urged support for Palestinian rights, and emphasised the need for a just, comprehensive peace based on the two-State solution. It also highlighted Qatar’s mediation role, praised its humanitarian and educational initiatives, and encouraged

OIC members to enforce international legal measures against violations. The summit reaffirmed unity, collective security and regional stability as central principles for confronting external threats.

GCC Defence Council holds Extraordinary Session in Doha

On 18 September 2025, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Joint Defence Council held an extraordinary session in Doha to assess regional threats following Israel's strike on Qatar. Chaired by Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Shaikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the meeting gathered defence ministers and officials from all GCC states along with GCC Secretary General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi. The Council strongly condemned Israel's attack as a grave violation of Qatar's sovereignty and international law, stressing that aggression against Qatar constituted aggression against all GCC members. It affirmed full support for Qatar and warned that the assault threatened regional stability and undermined mediation efforts in Gaza. The Council directed the Unified Military Command to strengthen joint defence mechanisms, including intelligence sharing, updating defence plans, advancing a missile early warning system, and holding joint air defence exercises.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan sign Mutual Defence Pact

On 17 September 2025, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed a defence agreement in Riyadh amid the heightened regional tensions. The agreement was signed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif in the presence of Army Chief General Asim Munir. The pact stipulates that any aggression against either country would be considered aggression against both. Saudi officials said the deal institutionalised long-standing cooperation rather than reacting to recent events, including Israel's strikes on Qatar. Pakistan has long deployed troops to Saudi Arabia for training and support, while Riyadh has extended billions in financial aid to Islamabad. India's foreign ministry said it was aware of the agreement and would study its implications for security and regional stability.

India and UAE review Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

On 10 September 2025, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy in New Delhi and reviewed the full range of the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, covering political, trade and investment, energy, defence and security, education, culture, consular matters and people-to-people ties. Both sides assessed ongoing initiatives and the implementation of decisions taken during recent high-level exchanges, while also exchanging views on global and regional developments. Al Hashimy's visit followed Misri's visit to the UAE in June 2025.

Riyadh launches international Yemen Maritime Security Partnership

On 16 September 2025, Riyadh hosted a high-level international conference, co-organised by Saudi Arabia and the UK, with delegates from over 35 countries, where the Yemen Maritime Security

Partnership was launched to secure critical waterways. The event saw pledges of millions of dollars in initial funding to rebuild the Yemeni Coast Guard through training, equipment, and institutional support under a ten-year plan. Saudi Ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Al Jaber highlighted the Red Sea's strategic importance, reaffirming the Kingdom's commitment to regional stability, free navigation, and support for Yemen's political, economic, and humanitarian development. He noted Saudi Arabia's long-standing aid, including US\$55.6 million for Coast Guard initiatives and announced an additional US\$4 million contribution. UK Ambassador Abda Sharif reaffirmed Britain's support, emphasising the significance of international backing. A new secretariat was established to coordinate assistance, ensuring strengthened Yemeni capacity to combat piracy, smuggling and human trafficking.

US designates Iran-aligned militia groups as Terrorist Organisations

On 17 September 2025, the United States announced the designation of four Iran-aligned militia groups – Harakat Al Nujaba, Kata'ib Sayyid Al Shuhada, Harakat Ansar Allah Al Awfiya, and Kata'ib Al Imam Ali – as Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs). These groups, all part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, have received Iranian support in the form of funding, training, weapons, and have threatened or carried out attacks against the US and coalition forces in Iraq, Syria and Jordan. Their leaders had previously been listed as Specially Designated Global Terrorists, with some linked to Iran's IRGC-Quds

Force and Hezbollah. The State Department reaffirmed earlier FTO designations of Kata'ib Hizballah and Asa'ib Ahl Al Haq, both long-standing Iran-backed militias responsible for deadly attacks on US personnel and Iraqi civilians. The designations blocked assets under US jurisdiction, prohibited business with US entities, and warned of secondary sanctions for dealings with the groups.

India-Israel Bilateral Investment Agreement

Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich visited India and signed a landmark Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) with India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 8 September 2025, replacing the 1996 treaty. The new agreement seeks to ensure certainty and protection for investors, provide a dispute resolution mechanism through arbitration, promote mutual investments, cooperation within the framework of regional development banks and collaboration in fintech, infrastructure, financial regulation and digital payments. Both leaders emphasised the depth of the economic relations between the two states based on shared strategic interests and expressed commitment to promoting economic cooperation. Smotrich met Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in Gandhinagar and discussed Israel's expertise in drip irrigation, developmental projects and investment opportunities in GIFT City. Smotrich also visited the Bombay Stock Exchange and met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, where talks emphasised infrastructure development and the recruitment of Indian workers for Israel.