

Headlines:

- **Turkey and 'Israel' to Export Gas to Europe**
- **British Government Announces 'Levelling Up' Agenda**
- **French Attempts to Woo Russia**

Details:

Turkey and 'Israel' to Export Gas to Europe

Turkey and 'Israel' can work together to carry 'Israeli' natural gas to Europe and the two countries will discuss energy cooperation during talks next month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was quoted as saying on Friday, the 4th February 2022. The discovery in recent years of huge natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean has increased the interest of nearby countries but exacerbated geopolitical tensions between Turkey and its neighbours. Erdogan told reporters on a return flight from Kyiv that energy cooperation would be on the agenda during President Isaac Herzog's visit to Turkey in mid-March, Reuters reported. As Russia-NATO stand-off over Ukraine, Europe's energy dependence on Russia is becoming a major strategic issue. It would appear Erdogan is looking to take advantage of the opportunities from this situation by collaborating with Israel.

British Government Announces 'Levelling Up' Agenda

UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a series of measures to get a grip on a burgeoning cost-of-living crisis, with millions of Britons facing record increases in their energy bills. The Government has come under pressure to act as millions of households brace for a record hike in energy bills from April, and the prospect of rising mortgage rates and tax increases. "The government is going to step in to directly help people manage those extra costs," Sunak said in the House of Commons on Thursday, the 3rd February, saying his intervention was worth £9 billion. Sunak announced the package shortly after energy regulator Ofgem said it would raise a price cap on domestic gas and power bills by 54% for 22 million customers. This threatens to catapult the average home energy bill to almost £2,000 a year from April, from £1,277 over the winter, plunging millions into fuel poverty. The official inflation rate reached 5.4% in December, the highest level since March 1992, driven by soaring gas and electricity prices and the higher cost of food and clothes. Referral to food banks and advice on emergency one-off grants, reached its highest level on record last month.

French Attempts to Woo Russia

French President Emmanuel Macron has visited both Moscow and in Kyiv after this week as tensions continue to rise in Europe. Macron said the Russian president told him that Russia "won't be initiating an escalation" against Ukraine. "I think it is important," Macron said. Putin also had positive things to say about the talks and said that ideas put forward by Macron could be a good basis to build upon. "A number of his ideas, proposals, which are probably still too early to talk about, I think it is quite possible to make the basis of our further joint steps," he said. The French have been working to de-escalate tensions after the US created an atmosphere of war. The last thing the French want to see is a major increase in the US presence in Europe. The French have been working on an independent EU military force and any war would now require US support which would get in the way of an independent European security organisation.