

MEIWeekly.



People taking a stroll near a Christmas tree beneath the Dubai skyline on 15 December 2023, in the festive buildup to the holiday season. Photo: Giuseppe Cacace / AFP

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS, & MORE

- **READ:** MEI's latest *Insight* explores the GCC nations' shift to a balanced position between India and Pakistan, driven by Islamabad's reluctance to play a proactive role in Middle East conflicts and the growing economic and diplomatic clout of New Delhi. Read the article [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Poll Reveals Wide Disapproval of Biden on Gaza

The findings of the NY Times/Siena poll suggested implications not only for US President Joe Biden as he enters the 2024 re-election year but also for the long-term relations between Tel Aviv and its most powerful benefactor, Washington.

Bahrain, the Only Regional Player in US Coalition

No regional country, except for Manama, has joined the US' naval task force against the Houthis in the Red Sea. Arab nations are seemingly hesitant to align with the US in a military venture due to its support for Israel's war in Gaza, despite relying heavily on the trade route.



The Houthis said that their strikes on passing container ships in the Red Sea are in support of Palestinians in the Gaza war raging between Israel and Hamas since 7 October. Photo: Mohammed Huwais / AFP

El-Sisi Re-elected as President

Despite moments where Mr Abdel Fattah el-Sisi looked like a man dangling from a ledge by the tips of his fingers, the Egyptian President steps into his third term with a resounding win in the re-elections.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ICYMI: S R Nathan Distinguished Lecture 2023

Catch the recap or relive the S R Nathan Lecture, during which former CIA director and US Army combat commander General David H. Petraeus delved into the latest developments in the Middle East. Gain valuable insights and perspectives on the region through his engaging conversation with MEI Chairman Bilahari Kausikan. To watch the full event or listen to the podcast, click [here](#).



General Petraeus touched on the complexities of the Gaza war, reforms in Saudi Arabia, and the development of the UAE, among other topics.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

UK Foreign Minister to Visit Jordan, Egypt

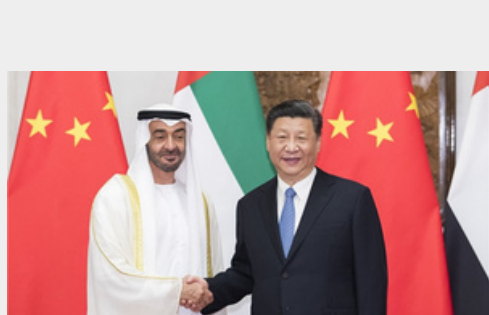
On his second visit to the region, British Foreign Minister David Cameron will travel to Amman and Cairo this week to push for a sustainable cease-fire and further humanitarian pauses in Gaza, sources said on Wednesday.



Last week, Mr Cameron (in picture) announced that those responsible for settler violence against Palestinians would be banned from entering Britain following a similar plan by the EU. Photo: David Cameron / X

UAE Seeks Closer China Ties

Abu Dhabi, an important hub for Beijing's growing economic relations in the Middle East, is using its Chinese connection to co-invest in Africa and the South Pacific, while considering more transactions in the yuan, an Emirati official said.



China renewed a currency swap deal with the UAE in November to expand financial and economic relations. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs China / Twitter

The Middle East Institute wishes all Christians a Merry Christmas ahead of the festive season.

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