

MEIWeekly.



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin has chosen Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over his main competitor Mr Benny Gantz to form a government. (Pictured above, from left) Mr Gantz, Mr Netanyahu, and Mr Rivlin clasp hands at a memorial service earlier this month. Photo: Israeli Government Press Office, by Amos Ben-Gershom

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

Legal Aspects of Maritime Piracy

Maritime piracy attacks have plagued the Middle East for the past decade, posing serious problems to shipping and navigation. Prof Milena Sterio will explore the legal definition of piracy under international law, jurisdictional and human rights issues related to the prosecution of piracy suspects, and regional approaches to combating maritime piracy. Join us on 3 October!



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Netanyahu Chosen to Form Government

Despite emerging from last week's Israeli elections slightly behind Mr Benny Gantz, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was given the mandate to form a government on Wednesday. President Reuven Rivlin picked Mr Netanyahu over his chief opponent because his chances of cobbling together a coalition were greater "at the moment". The president's decision offers a potential political lifeline to Mr Netanyahu, who is facing possible indictment for corruption.



Anti-Sissi protestors at a 2015 demonstration against the Egyptian president's clampdown on social media in London. Photo: Alisdare Hickson, shared on Flickr

Egypt Arrests Anti-Government Protestors

Egyptian security forces have arrested more than 2,000 people since rare protests demanding the removal of President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi broke out in Cairo and other areas last Friday and Saturday. The protests were sparked by videos alleging corruption by Mr al-Sissi, which may have struck a chord with Egyptians disillusioned by growing poverty and repression in the country. To curb the protests, authorities also restricted access to Facebook Messenger, BBC and other digital platforms.

Iranian President Says No to Nuclear Talks

Addressing the United Nations (UN) general assembly in New York on Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani ruled out negotiations on its nuclear programme with the United States so long as sanctions remain in place and accused the US of "economic terrorism". His remarks dashed efforts to bring about a summit between himself and US President Donald Trump at the UN, and is reflective of an impasse despite mediation efforts from France, the United Kingdom, Pakistan and Japan.

LOOKAHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

UAE to Hold Largest FNC Elections

The United Arab Emirates is set to elect its Federal National Council (FNC) on 5 October. Responsibilities of FNC members include passing draft federal law and discussing international treaties. Of the 40 members, 20 will be elected and the rest appointed. With more than 330,000 eligible voters, next Saturday's elections will be the largest to date. It will also be the first to implement a recent government decree requiring half of the 20 elected members to be women.

Netanyahu's Corruption Trial to Begin

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's pre-indictment trial for corruption is set to begin on 2 October, after a three-month delay from its original date in June. The trial comes amidst Mr Netanyahu's attempt to form a government following last week's elections. Mr Netanyahu has persistently denied the allegations, claiming that they are part of a witch-hunt by political rivals and the media to force him out of office.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT'S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: Depending on how strong they commit to an ally, small states are always caught between being entrapped and being abandoned. In his article "Engaged Small Neural States", using Austria as an example, Prof Heinz Gärtner illustrates how a small state can employ a strategy of engaged neutrality to ensure its security. <https://nus.edu/2INsSAI>

Despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, Israel congratulated Saudi Arabia on its national day via a series of tweets in Arabic. <https://bit.ly/2lmakqX>

TWITTER: Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan (right) was asked by Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammed bin Salman and United States President Donald Trump to mediate with Iran. <https://reut.rs/2ZfNUH>



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