

MEI Weekly.



Iran's president-elect Ebrahim Raisi delivers a speech at the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad, northeastern Iran on 22 June 2021. Mr Raisi, a conservative hardliner, has indicated that he will not compromise on Iran's missile and regional policies in negotiations with the US. Photo: MOHSEN ESMAEILZADEH / ISNA NEWS AGENCY / AFP

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: Our latest MEI Insight piece takes a look at the Malhama Tactical, an unusual militant group op-erating in Syria that promotes itself as the first jihadist private military training company. What does the organisation signify about the evolving role of jihadist mercenaries in the Syrian conflict? Read the full article [here](#).

READ: The rise of conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi to Iran's presidency has sparked recent discussion about its implications on Tehran's nuclear discussions with world powers as well as for Iran, in general. MEI Senior Research Fellow Asif Shuja told China Daily that with Mr Raisi as the new president, Iran is likely to continue its focus on development and peace policies. Read the full article [here](#).

READ: Ebrahim Raisi's victory at Iran's highly controversial presidential election last week marks a decisive consolidation of power by the conservative faction, which now holds the reigns of the country's parliament, judiciary and presidency. This article explores what Iran policymaking will look like under Mr Raisi. Read it in full [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Iran's Incoming President Signals Tough Stance on Missile and Regional Policies

Iran's president-elect Ebrahim Raisi has signalled that Iran will take a tougher stance in maintaining its ballistic missiles and regional policies. Tehran is currently in negotiations in Vienna, with international powers over a revived nuclear agreement and the US is pushing for a broader deal that would include Iranian concessions on missile and militia issues. However, Mr Raisi, a conservative cleric and ex-judiciary head with no political experience, has firmly said that he would not meet with US President Joe Biden and urged the US to lift all sanctions on Iran as a goodwill gesture.

Saudis Behind Khashoggi Murder Received Paramilitary Training in the US

Four Saudi operatives involved in the 2018 murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi are revealed to have received paramilitary training in the US the year before. The contract for it was approved by the US State Department, which is responsible for vetting foreign soldiers who receive training on US soil. The training itself, conducted by Arkansas-based company Tier 1 Group, was defensive in nature with the protection of Saudi leaders in mind. Declassified American intelligence released earlier this year concluded that the murder of Mr Khashoggi was approved by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and dealings like this underscores the perils of military partnerships with repressive governments.



People holding posters of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi who was assassinated in Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. Four of the Saudi operatives involved in his murder received paramilitary training in the US. Photo: YASIN AKGUL / AFP

Gulf States to Remain Oil-dependent for the Next Ten Years

A new report by credit ratings agency Moody's concluded that oil-exporting Gulf countries will remain heavily dependent on hydrocarbon production for at least the next ten years. Oil and gas accounts for over 20 percent of the gross domestic product in most Gulf states, and governments in the region have been eager to diversify their economies and reduce the economic dependence on fossil fuels, in recent years. However, the report stated that diversification efforts will continue to be hindered by reduced availability of resources to fund diversification projects in a lower oil price environment and by intra-GCC competition.

CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

MEI's Bridging the Gulf Series: Session 8

Falconry, once at the heart of Arabian desert life, has undergone transformations due to rapid urbanisation in the Gulf but it remains an integral part of Arabian culture. Tune in to the upcoming session of our Bridging the Gulf series, held in collaboration with the UAE Embassy in Singapore, which will welcome a falcon expert to share about the tradition and sport of the majestic birds.



This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom tomorrow, **Saturday, 26 June 2021, at 2.30pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

Iran's Presidential Election: Impact on the Islamic Republic's Policies

The engineering of president-elect Ebrahim Raisi's victory in Iran's recent election on 18 June 2021 constitutes a potential domestic and foreign policy watershed. Designed to ensure conservative control of all levers of power in Iran and help Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei manage his succession, the highly controversial election swept aside any trace of the country's democratic pretensions. Join us to find out what impact the rise of Mr Raisi will have on regional security in the Middle East?

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Tuesday, 6 July 2021, from 4.00pm to 5.30pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

[Book Talk] Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks: Migration, Education and Islam

What is the "Indonesian legacy" in Saudi Arabia? How have Saudi Arabia's influential Islamic scholars impacted Indonesian Muslims? Join author Dr Sumanto Al Qurtuby in discussing his book *Saudi Arabia and Indonesian Networks: Migration, Education and Islam*, which examines Indonesian educational migrants and intellectual travellers in Saudi Arabia to provide a unique portrait of the religious and intellectual linkages between the two countries.

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Thursday, 8 July 2021, from 4.00pm to 5.30pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Israel's New Foreign Minister to Visit the UAE

Newly appointed Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will visit the UAE from 29 to 30 June to inaugurate an Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate in Dubai. This marks the first such trip by a top Israeli diplomat to the UAE, one of the Arab states which normalised relations with Israel last year.



Canadian Minister to Visit Israel, West Bank

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau is set to visit Israel and the West Bank soon, to advance a two-state solution following the recent escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His office says his visit to the Middle East is part of an international trip that begins in Italy, where he will attend several ministerial meetings including one with his G20 counterparts. Following that, he will be travelling to Jordan, Israel and the West Bank to advance Canada's support towards the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region and a two-state solution with both Israelis and Palestinians living within secure borders that are mutually respected and recognised.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



CAN'T MAKE IT TO OUR EVENTS? LISTEN AT YOUR OWN TIME!

