

# MEI Weekly.



Damaged houses are pictured following an earthquake in the Gayan district, Paktika province of Afghanistan on June 22, 2022. The 5.9-magnitude quake, which killed at least 1,000 people, struck hardest in the rugged east, where people already lead hardscrabble lives in the grip of a humanitarian crisis made worse since the Taliban takeover in August. Photo: AFP

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

- **READ:** In the latest instalment of our Insights series, Professor Simon Chadwick discusses how Qatar uses football as a soft power tactic, from signings at Paris Saint-Germain to hosting the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup. Read the article [here](#).
- **READ:** MEI Research Fellow Aisha Al-Sarihi shares her research on the current development of hydrogen energy projects in the Gulf and what obstacles they face for long term development in a blog post for the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. Read her piece [here](#).

## WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

### Israel's Government Collapses, New Elections Called

Just one year since its formation last June, Israel's governing coalition has collapsed. Outgoing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett led a historically comprehensive coalition that represented parties from the right, left and centre, including the first independent Arab party to be part of a governing coalition. It fell apart after defections from two right-wing members, differing ideologies within, and a wave of Palestinian attacks in Israel sparking criticism of the government. The new elections called for in the fall will be the country's fifth in three years, and the country will be led by caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid in the interim period.

### MBS visits Turkey, "New Period of Cooperation"

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to President Erdogan in Turkey this week marks a turning point in the relations between the two countries following years of bitter tensions after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. The countries signed a joint memorandum stating that they are determined to start a "new period of cooperation". Relations improved after President Erdogan endorsed Khashoggi's murder trial being moved to Saudi Arabia, and he has an economic imperative to strengthen relations with the Gulf country as Turkey sources much of its natural gas from Russia and its economy has been battered by inflation.



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (R) shakes hands with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman (L) during an official ceremony at the Presidential Complex in Ankara, on June 22, 2022. Photo: Adem ALTAN / AFP

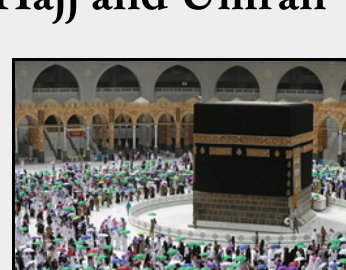
### 1,000+ Killed in Afghanistan after Earthquake

Over a thousand killed and at least 1,600 injured after an earthquake struck 28 miles southeast of Khost, a provincial capital in Afghanistan. The quake, with a magnitude of 5.9 and Afghanistan's deadliest in two decades, is just the latest economic or humanitarian crisis to plague the country since the Taliban seized power last August.

## CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

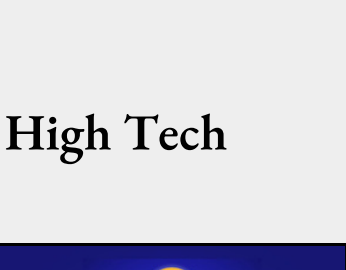
### Technological Developments at the Hajj and Umrah

Technology, particularly the mobile phone, has not only brought ease, and more pilgrims, to the Hajj, but has also enhanced the experience. Covid-19 brought in another change, with an increase in the use of technology to keep worshippers safe. The Middle East Institute, in collaboration with the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies, will host H.E. Dr Amr Almaddah, the Deputy Minister for Hajj and Umrah Services, to address the future of technological development at the Hajj and Umrah. This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Monday, 27 June 2022, from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).



### Boots Off the Ground: Chinese PSC High Tech Sector in Complex Environments

Tune in to the latest instalment of our Boots Off the Ground podcast series to listen in on the MEI's Dr Alessandro Ardullo's conversation with Ms Meia Nouwens, Senior Fellow for Chinese Defense Policy and Military Modernization, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). They discuss artificial intelligence and whether Chinese private security companies are the new ambassadors for Chinese surveillance technologies. The episode will be released on **Wednesday, 29 June 2022**. For more details, click [here](#).



For more details, click [here](#).

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### Biden to Visit the Middle East in July

Biden's upcoming visit to the Middle East in mid-July has been fraught with controversy. His visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories will come as Israel's government has collapsed and he will be hosted there by a caretaker prime minister, and his visit to Saudi Arabia has received condemnation by human rights groups and comes amid accusations of reversing previous policy towards the Gulf state. The four day trip will be historic as President Biden will take a rare flight directly from Israel to Saudi Arabia and could determine significant policy changes in the region.



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### Qatar World Cup Tourists Face Housing Squeeze

Accommodating over a million World Cup fans remains a challenge for Doha, another obstacle it faces as it prepares for hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup later this year. With hotel rooms in short supply, the country instead offers Bedouin-style tents and a taste of authentic Qatari camping.

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