

MEI Weekly



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (R) received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, His Highness Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud during the latter's official visit to Singapore in January 2022. Earlier this week, Mr Lee welcomed the deepening ties between Singapore and the kingdom when he spoke to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the phone. Photo: Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore.

WHAT'S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS AND MORE

READ: In our latest *Insight* piece, find out about Pakistan's role in (de)stabilising Afghanistan since the US withdrawal from the Central Asian country. Read the article [here](#).

READ: In his piece for the *South China Morning Post*, MEI Visiting Research Professor Gyorgy Busztin notes that as Russia seeks to re-establish its Soviet-era sphere of influence and Turkey turns towards Central Asia, their opposing interests might soon collide. Read it [here](#).

READ: MEI Senior Research Fellow Jean-Loup Samaan's latest book, *The Indian Ocean as a New Political and Security Region*, analyses the emergence of the Indian Ocean as a strategic space of central importance as well as its prospective future. Check out his co-authored book [here](#).

READ: Ben Lynfield, former Middle East affairs correspondent at *The Jerusalem Post*, opines it may be that only an end to the occupation of the Palestinians that could help Israel come to terms with the security and surveillance web entangling and endangering it. Read his piece [here](#).

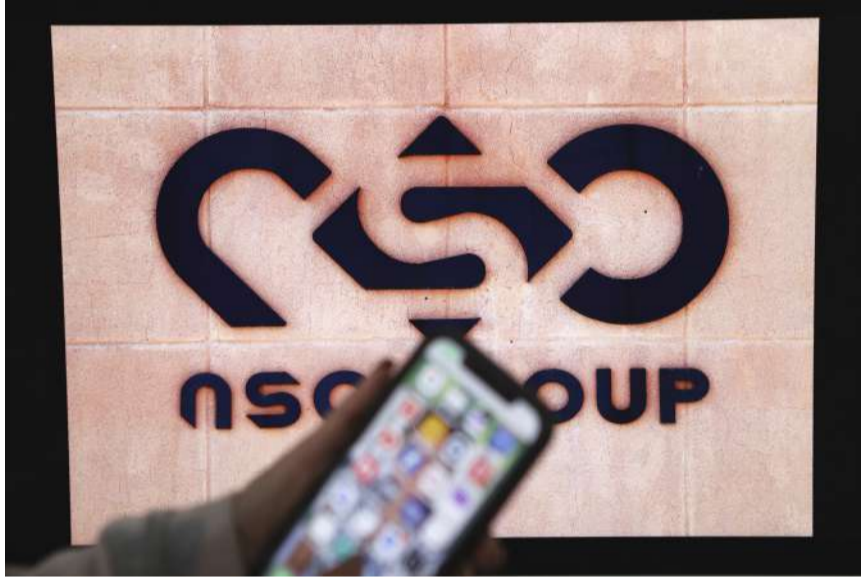
WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

S'pore To Deepen Ties with Saudi Arabia

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong welcomed the strengthening of relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia when he spoke to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the phone on Tuesday, 8 February 2022. In a Facebook post, PM Lee said: "Our countries celebrate 45 years of diplomatic relations this year and we welcomed the deepening of relations, including economic co-operation through the Saudi-Singapore Joint Committee." During the phone conversation, they also discussed developments in Saudi Arabia.

Israel to Investigate Domestic Use of Spyware

The intensifying scrutiny of NSO Group, the Israeli spyware firm, has largely come from abroad as evidence mounted that authoritarian governments had used NSO products to spy on political opponents. Earlier this week, the controversy came home as the Israeli government said it would investigate reports that the Israeli police had illegally used spyware against its citizens without a court order, including a key state witness in the corruption trial of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The efforts constitute the Israeli government's most public expression of concern about NSO — once promoted by Israeli officials as a centrepiece of the Israeli tech industry.



A photographic illustration shows a mobile phone near the NSO Group company logo on 9 February 2022 in the Israeli city of Netanya. Israel's ground-breaking surveillance technology was once feted as a prized export bolstering diplomatic ties abroad but reports of the secret spyware being used on citizens at home has triggered domestic outrage. Photo: Jack Guez / AFP.

Dubai to Attract 50 MNCs Within Three Years

Dubai plans to attract 50 multinational companies (MNCs) within three years, the UAE government said on Wednesday, citing a statement from the Dubai International Chamber. The plan is part of a three-year strategy to boost the Emirate's status as a global trade hub, in face of increased competition from Saudi Arabia. It added that it will also support 100 Dubai-based companies with international expansion.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

#ICYMI Iran-Europe Dynamics and the JCPOA Negotiations

Since the start of the Iranian nuclear controversy about two decades ago, the European Union (EU) has been steadfastly mediating between Iran and the US. This webinar explores the EU's motivation behind its central role in the nuclear negotiations, the nature of Iran-EU relations and the EU's foresight on Iran's role in the Middle East, alongside its own.



Click [here](#) to catch the insightful discussion we had.

#ICYMI [Book Discussion] Routledge Handbook on China-Middle East Relations

Catch the insightful discussion we had with China expert Jonathan Fulton, who shared about the various ways Beijing's presence is growing in the Middle East.



Click [here](#) to know more about the effect of these developments.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

What To Expect as the Vienna Talks Resume

Political delegations from Iran, China, Russia, France, Germany, the UK and US are expected to engage in the final stretch of negotiations that began in April last year. Iran and the US have bridged some gaps since the start of the eighth round of talks in November last year but differences remain, especially on what sanctions the US must lift. To reach an agreement in Vienna, a realistic view of the talks and the benefits a restored JCPOA could entail for all sides is required, analysts say.



ISIS to Name Successor in Coming Weeks

The next leader of the Islamic State is likely to be from a close circle of battle-hardened Iraqi jihadists who emerged in the aftermath of the 2003 US invasion, two Iraqi security officials and three independent analysts said. The group of potential successors to Abu Ibrahim al-Quraishi, who blew himself up during a US operation to capture him in Syria last week, includes one commander whom Washington and Baghdad declared killed last year. Those following the Islamic State closely expect it to name a successor in the coming weeks, as the group continues a stubborn and deadly insurgency in the Middle East.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



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

