

# MEI Weekly.



The MEI Annual Conference 2022 is happening online over two days this month – 18 & 19 May. This year's edition will examine how Asian giants China and India are staking positions in the Middle East. Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean will speak at the opening, while Minister for Home Affairs and Law K. Shanmugam will deliver a keynote. Click [here](#) to register.

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

**READ:** In the latest piece of our *MEI Perspectives* series, find out how the UAE's efforts at normalising ties with its regional competitors, Iran and Turkey, are part of a broader vision to ensure longterm sustainability Read it [here](#).

**REGISTER:** Held virtually, MEI's two-day Annual Conference this year will examine how Asian giants China and India are staking positions in the Middle East. Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean will speak at the opening, while Minister for Home Affairs and Law K. Shanmugam will deliver a keynote. Sign up for it [here](#).

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

### OPEC Fails to Boost Output

Although some members like Iraq made substantial boosts, the cartel failed to increase overall output last month. Operational disruptions and diminished investment were partially to blame and the situation has been exacerbated by a de facto embargo on Russian supplies by many refiners following the Ukraine war. Most significantly, Saudi Arabia has refused to fill in the supply gap and key consumers such as the US have taken to deploying emergency oil reserves.

### Dubai Delivery Drivers Stage Rare Protest

Strikes are illegal in the UAE but this did not stop many of Dubai's food-delivery workers from staging a mass walkout and causing the Deliveroo app, one of the most popular in the country, to be down during the last days of Ramadan. The drivers, who are generally employed by contractors and subjected to exorbitant fees, were spurred into action after the firm backtracked on promises to raise pay and extend working shifts.



A Deliveroo rider cycles through central London on 26 March 2021. Over the past weekend, food-delivery drivers protesting wage cuts and grueling working conditions went on an extremely rare strike in Dubai and it paralysed Deliveroo, one of the UAE's main delivery apps. Photo: Daniel LEAL / AFP

### CIA Chief Met Saudi Crown Prince

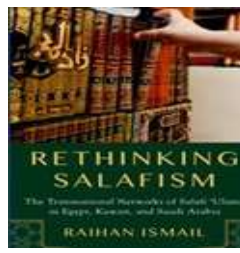
CIA Director William Burns made an unannounced trip to Saudi Arabia last month to meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. American officials report that the meeting had a 'better tone' than previous engagements. The meeting comes at a crucial juncture – the relationship between Washington and Riyadh is at its lowest point in decades as President Biden and Crown Prince MBS continue to disagree over issues such as the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 and requests for Saudi Arabia to pump more oil to tame prices and undercut Moscow's war finances.

## CALENDAR: UPCOMING MEI EVENTS

### [Book Talk] Rethinking Salafism: The Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama

Despite receiving scrutiny as the one of the main ideological sources for extremist violence perpetrated by jihadi groups, Salafism is not monolithic. Learn about the different approaches to Salafism in Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and how they cooperate to foster a collective Salafi identity.

This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Thursday, 26 May 2022, at 5pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).



### Turkey's Middle East Ambitions and Regional Role

With the US presence in the Middle East waning, Turkey's role becomes crucial not only because of its intrinsic strength but also due to its relative standing by virtue of its NATO membership which could make it a conduit for Western powers. The discussion aims to delve into understanding Ankara's Middle East ambitions and its regional role.



This public talk will be conducted online via Zoom on **Wednesday, 1 June 2022, at 4pm (SGT)**. For more details and to register, click [here](#).

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

### Twitter 2.0 and Anonymous Arab Dissidents

The Tesla CEO has pledged to 'authenticate all humans' and remove bots from the platform but experts are concerned about the practical implications of this. They assert that de-anonymisation could pose a risk to anonymous political dissidents living under authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and that Musk's changes to Twitter could force activists to choose between freely expressing their views and compromising their physical safety – an impossible choice.



### Egypt to Store Carbon with Italy's ENI

The Italian oil and gas company will invest \$25 million in a project to store carbon dioxide in Northern Egypt. This is part of Egypt's attempt to improve its carbon footprint by pursuing renewable energy and it is one of Cairo's several deals struck with European partners.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!



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

