

# MEIWeekly.



Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi with Saudi Arabia's National Security Advisor Musaed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban (left) and Iranian national security advisor, Ali Shamkhani, posing for a photo in Beijing on 10 March 2023. Photo: The Henry L. Stimson Centre website

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

### China Brokers Iran-Saudi Détente

After years of open hostility and proxy conflicts across the Middle East, both sides agreed to re-establish diplomatic ties, in a significant pivot that was facilitated by China. Beijing's success highlighted its growing role as a power player and counterbalance to Washington in the region.

### Israel Jolted by Re-Conciliation

The news of the rapprochement left Tel Aviv in shock and anxiety after hoping that shared fears about Iran would lead to ties with the Kingdom and a regional security alliance. This further exacerbated the sense of national peril caused by deep domestic divisions over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies.



The Israeli premier in a Cabinet meeting at the prime minister's office in Jerusalem, on 23 February 2023. Photo: Ronen Zvulun / Pool / AFP

### Deal Significant, But Not a Breakthrough - Yet

While being potentially significant in various ways, the director of research at the Moshe Dayan Centre argues that "it's premature to call the Iran-Saudi agreement a game-changer". He emphasises that the success of this deal depends on how both countries interpret the standard of mutual non-interference.

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

- **READ:** The *Insight* examines Qatar's food security programme, its efforts to ramp up local food production in light of the Arab blockade, and the sustainability of its schemes. Read the article [here](#).

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### Gender and Climate Change in the GCC

Have you ever wondered if gender equality is helped by diversification and climate-based solutions in the GCC? With COP 28 taking place in the UAE this year, what is the track record of the GCC countries in this area? To find out, tune in to this public talk that will be conducted online via Zoom on Tuesday, 21 March 2023, from 4.00 pm to 5 pm (SGT). To register, click [here](#).



Photo: MEI

### #ICYMI: Indigenising Islam as a Minority

If you missed MEI's conference on the "indigenisation" of Islam as minorities with reflections on the South African Capetonian Muslim community with Dr Hisham A. Hellyer, a scholar of the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, you can listen to the podcast or watch the full event [here](#).

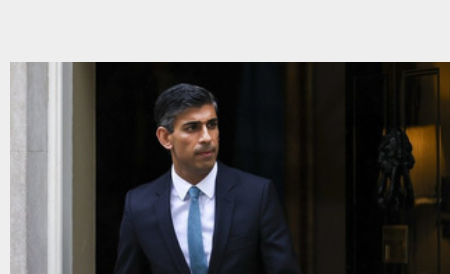


Muslim leaders during prayers in Cape Town. Photo: Cape Town Islamic Educational Centre website

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### Netanyahu to Visit the UK

The trip will take place next week despite calls from 1,000 Israeli intellectuals, academics, writers and artists, urging the UK to cancel his visit.



Mr Netanyahu will meet British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on his trip. Photo: Wilson Centre

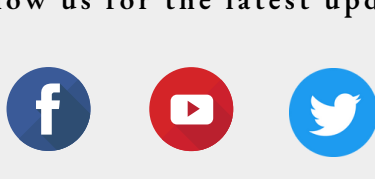
### Beijing to Host GCC-Iran Summit

China wants to bring Tehran and its six Arab neighbours of the Gulf Cooperation Council together later this year for a regional summit. A successful dialogue between them would mark another diplomatic victory for China.



Chinese President Xi Jinping welcoming Iran President Ebrahim Raisi to Beijing on 14 February. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China

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