

# MEIWeekly.



Temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius in some southwestern cities in Iran as the health ministry advised older people, children, and those with underlying health conditions to stay indoors because of the risk of heat strokes. Photo: Atta Kenare / AFP

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

- **READ:** This Perspective explores Tokyo's efforts to strengthen economic and defence ties with the Arab Gulf states, aiming for a self-sufficient system and a stable security environment to safeguard its immediate energy needs. Read the article [here](#).

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

### Heatwave Triggers Shutdown in Iran

On Tuesday, Iran announced a two-day public holiday in response to “unprecedented” heat, ordering all government agencies, banks and schools to shut down, an unusual move prompted by soaring temperatures that threatened public health and strained the country’s power grid.

### Israeli Firm to Work with Saudi Company

In a rare move, Israel and Saudi Arabia, two countries without official diplomatic ties, established a business partnership. More business opportunities are opening between the two countries despite the lack of normalisation on the political front.



Since several Arab countries including Bahrain and the UAE normalised relations with Israel after signing the Abraham Accords in September 2020, the path to Saudi normalisation has been solidifying and there have been talks on a deal. Photo: Shealah Craighead / Official White House Photo

### China and UAE Set for First Joint Air Drill

Beijing and Abu Dhabi will conduct the “Falcon Shield 2023” exercises in Xinjiang next month, revealing China’s broader regional geopolitical ambitions beyond energy trade despite the US’ larger presence in the Middle East.

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### Hope and an Eye on the Future: The UAE’s Space Sector

How does the UAE's National Space Strategy 2030 support defence and communications? What are the key findings of the UAE's Mars Mission, and how has local interest and capacity grown since 2017? MEI's latest Bridging the Gulf session, featuring the Director of the National Space Science and Technology Center at UAE University Mr Ali Al Shehhi, will answer these questions and more. This public talk will be conducted via Zoom on 16 August 2023 at 3pm (SGT). For more details and to sign up, [click here](#).



Mr Ali Al Shehhi is a former Emirati Air Force pilot with expertise in intelligence and space satellite domains. Photo: UAE Embassy in Singapore

### ME 101 2023 #01: Great Power Competition

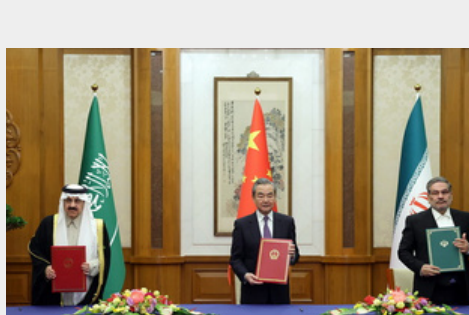
Embark on a captivating journey with the ME 101 lecture series, commencing on 17 August 2023, at 5 pm (SGT). Discover why developments in the Middle East matter to Singapore, as discussed by MEI Executive Director Michelle Teo, followed by an analysis by MEI Senior Research Fellow Dr Jean-Loup Samaan on great power competition, its impacts on the region, and more. This public talk will be conducted both in-person and online via Zoom. Mark your calendars! For more information and to register, [click here](#).



The lecture will also address the revision of strategies by regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the UAE in response to the evolving “cold war” dynamics. Photo: United States Air Force

### ME 101 2023 #02: Regional Realignment

Join us for the second session of the ME 101 as MEI Senior Research Fellow Dr Asif Shuja and Policy Fellow at the Bourse & Bazaar Foundation Dr Jacopo Scita examine Iran’s regional outreach, including its agreement with Saudi Arabia which was brokered by China, and its implications on the regional architecture and whether it converges with the US-brokered Abraham Accords. This public talk will be conducted via Zoom. For more information and to register, [click here](#).



The China-brokered Iran-Saudi deal was an unimaginably topsy-turvy development, given their decades-long animosity. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### ASEAN-GCC Summit

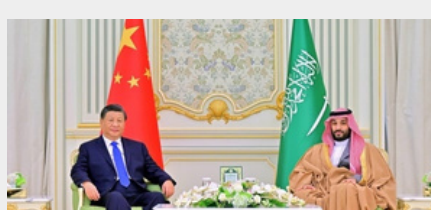
After more than two decades of relations, ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will reportedly hold their first summit in Jakarta in October.



The first ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meeting was convened in June 2009 in Manama, Bahrain and saw the adoption of the ASEAN-GCC Joint Vision. Photo: Office of the Special Envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council

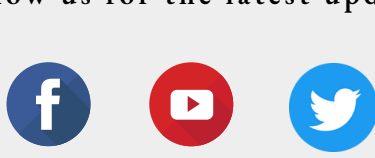
### Riyadh to Host Ukraine Peace Talks

Diplomats involved in the discussion have revealed that the meeting, scheduled for 5 and 6 August 2023 in Jeddah, will gather senior officials from around 30 countries, as part of Europe and Washington’s heightened efforts to consolidate international support for Ukraine’s peace demands.

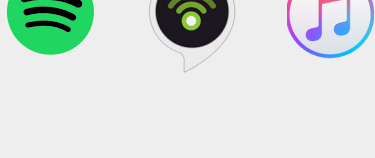


Western diplomats said that Saudi Arabia was picked to host the second round of talks partly in hopes of persuading China, which has maintained close ties to Moscow, to participate. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China

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