

MEIWeekly.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reportedly signed off on a sanctions waiver on Iran last week after an agreement in principle on a prisoner exchange was reached last month. Photo: Jim Watson / AFP

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

- **WRITE:** What are the primary motivations behind national space programmes in the Middle East? How do these programmes support military strategies? MEI will explore these themes for an *Insights* publication, and is inviting papers. Submit your abstract of 250 words or less by 15 October. Find out more [here](#).
- **READ:** MEI's latest *Perspective* examines the UAE's decision to join BRICS and how this move reflects the nation's ambitions, while adapting to an evolving multipolar world where middle powers are playing a more active role. Read the article [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

US to Release Iran Funds as Part of Prisoner Swap

The waiver, a vital step in a prior agreement, involves releasing five Iranians held in the US for sanctions-related offences and facilitating the transfer of frozen oil revenue to Qatar's central bank, from where it can be disbursed for the purchase of humanitarian goods for Tehran.

El Al Airlines Refuses to Fly Netanyahu to New York

According to reports from Israel's Channel 13, there is an unspoken agreement among pilots in the company's 777 fleet, most of whom are veterans of the nation's Air Force, not to volunteer to operate the flight for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife.



The channel revealed on Friday morning that El Al did not put out the tender for Mr Netanyahu's upcoming trip, where he is slated to participate in the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly. Photo: El Al USA / Twitter

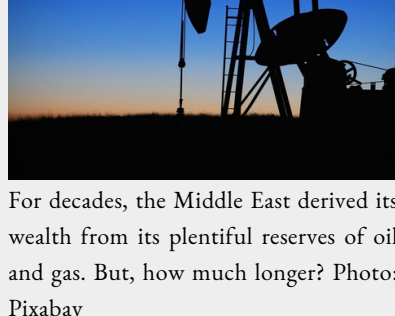
The Gulf States' Formula for a 'New' Middle East

This Economist article identifies three significant changes which could change the place of the region in the world as the Gulf states aim to export their diplomacy-stability model. Previous attempts have faced persistent challenges. In promising times now, will it succeed?

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ME 101 2023 #06: Whither Oil and Gas

Join MEI for the next ME 101 session as Gulf energy expert Dr Li Chen-Sim explores the state of energy rent in the Middle East and the region's prospects for a post-oil future. Don't miss this opportunity to broaden your understanding of oil and gas in the region. This public talk will be conducted via Zoom on 21 September 2023 at 5pm (SGT). For more details and to sign up, click [here](#).



For decades, the Middle East derived its wealth from its plentiful reserves of oil and gas. But, how much longer? Photo: Pixabay

ICYMI- ME 101 2023 #02: Iran-Arab Relations

How might Iran's regional diplomacy, including its China-brokered agreement with Saudi Arabia, influence other initiatives such as the US-led Abraham Accords, and potentially reshape the balance of external power in the Middle East? The second session of the ME 101 series unpacked these topics and beyond. Click [here](#) to catch up now with the full video or listen to the podcast – your backstage pass to this lecture!



The China-brokered Iran-Saudi deal was an unimaginably topsy-turvy development, given their decades-long animosity. Photo: Atta Kenare / AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Kuwait's Crown Prince to Visit Beijing

The visit, set to occur later this month as reported by the state news agency KUNA, is anticipated to include the signing of significant and essential agreements across various domains, thereby strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.



President Xi Jinping called China and Kuwait "tried and true friends" during his meeting with Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) at the Great Hall of the People in 2018. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China

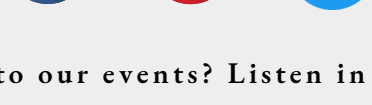
India-Middle East Trade Route to Challenge China?

US President Joe Biden, alongside leaders from India, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, introduced a new trade route connecting New Delhi to the Middle East and Europe via railways and ports. The trade route raises questions of whether it complements China's Belt and Road Initiative, or is it intended to compete with it?



As the White House said that the project would usher in a "new era of connectivity", the Gulf states insisted that they maintain a balanced position across the board. Photo: Narendra Modi / Twitter

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Can't make it to our events? Listen in your own time!

