

# MEI Weekly.



Measures to sanction the International Criminal Court (ICC) for issuing arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a key American ally, were pushed through the House by Republicans last year but stalled in the Democratic-led Senate. It is now set to change under US President-elect Donald Trump. Photo: AFP

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

**READ:** 'Hype, hope, and a reality check' - MEI's Perspective explores why Saudi Arabia's football league has struggled to maintain momentum after its lavish summer 2023 transfer spending and why the "Arab solution" is not the answer to building an elite competition. Read the article [here](#).

**READ:** MEI's Perspective analyses how major setbacks to Tehran's militia network, the "Axis of Resistance", could reshape the Middle East and potentially mark the decline of Iran's influence in the region. Read the article [here](#).

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

### US House Passes Bill to Sanction ICC Over Israel Warrants

With Republicans controlling Congress and Mr Donald Trump set to take office on 20 January, the legislation is almost certain to be enacted. "This Bill sends an incredibly important message across the globe", said a House representative, who accused the court of anti-semitism.

### Top Iranian General Admits 'Big Defeat' in Syria

Contrary to the official line of Iranian leaders, Brigadier General Behrouz Esbati revealed that ties with Bashar al-Assad had been strained for months before his ousting. He also accused an ally, Moscow, of misleading Tehran by claiming that Russian jets were bombing Syrian rebels.



"We were defeated, and defeated very badly, we took a very big blow and it's been very difficult", he added. Iran's top leaders for weeks downplayed the magnitude of Tehran's strategic loss in Syria last month. Photo: Twitter

### ISD Detains Three Men for Self-Radicalisation

Each of the men had taken steps to familiarise themselves with weapons, with one visiting a shooting range in Bangkok, said Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD). They made preparations to engage in armed violence overseas and were arrested in October 2024.

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### ICYMI: MEI Round-up 2024

MEI organised a year-end Middle East round-up event, featuring General David Petraeus, former US Army commander in Iraq and former CIA director. He discussed the latest developments in Syria, offered insights on the Gaza war, and explored other key topics. Revisit the event or catch up on what you missed by watching the video [here](#).



General Petraeus praised digital transformations in the Gulf alongside other socio-economic changes in the region.

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### Minister Masagos' Visit to Egypt and Saudi Arabia Underway

Minister for Social and Family Development, Second Minister for Health and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli (pictured) is in the region for an official trip, which will end on 15 January 2025. The visit aims to strengthen Singapore's bilateral engagements with Egypt and Saudi Arabia for future collaborations.



In Saudi Arabia, the minister will attend the annual Hajj and Umrah Exhibition and Conference. Photo: AFP

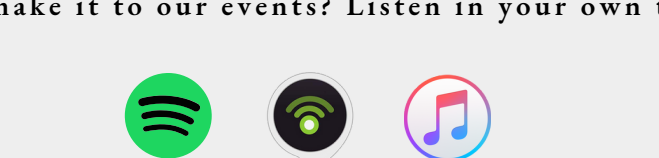
### Turkey Planning to Start Flights to Damascus

Ankara is planning to start flights to Syria's Damascus in the coming days, Turkish Transport Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu (pictured) said on Thursday. "When the connection from Damascus to Istanbul is established, we will have solved a great need. Our efforts continue on this issue", he added.

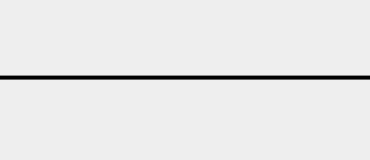


In an interview, the minister said that initial flights would be visually guided due to a lack of technology. Photo: AFP

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