

MEIWeekly.



In a move likely to deepen divisions in a country still reeling from two years of war, hundreds of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Israelis converged in Jerusalem on Thursday to protest attempts to enlist some of them in the military. They chanted prayers and slogans outside major ultra-Orthodox institutions, blocking roads and streets. Photo: AFP

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

READ: MEI examines the roots of China–Israel economic ties, the geopolitical pressures straining them today, and why — despite tensions — they are still mutually valuable for both sides. Read the article [here](#).

READ: By highlighting four key trends in today's Middle East — such as widening Gulf–Arab disparities — this MEI Perspectives article argues that the region cannot be captured by a single grand narrative. Read it [here](#).

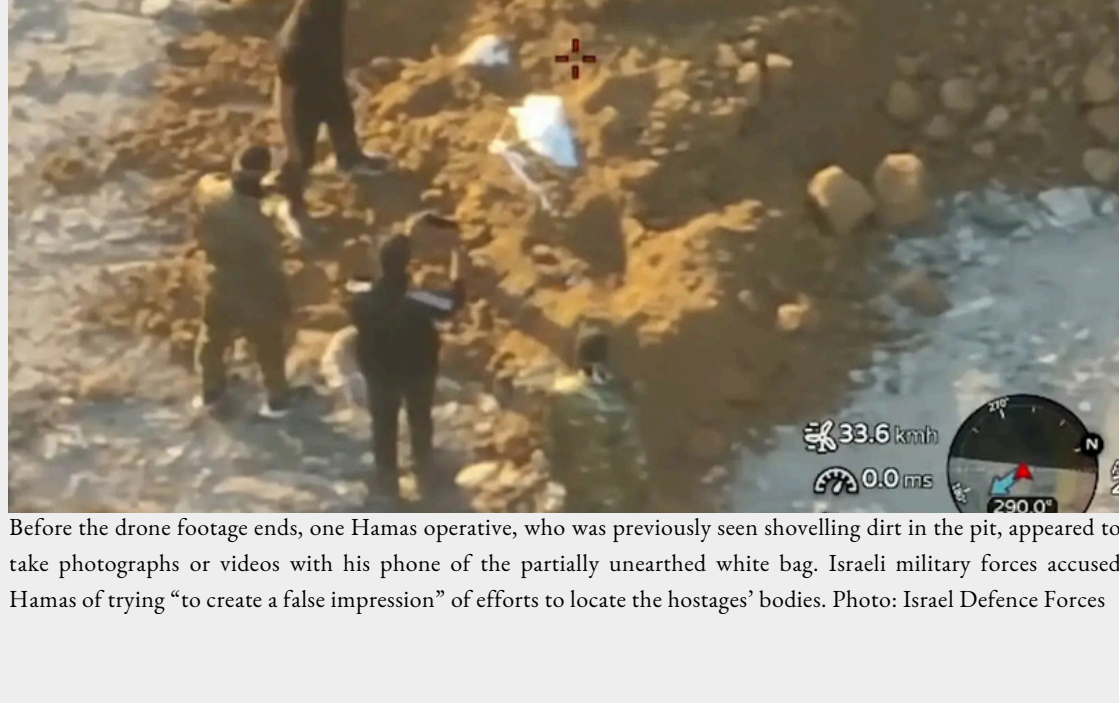
WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Ultra-Orthodox Israelis Protest Against Conscription

This show of strength came as the government sought a compromise to end the decades-old practice of granting exemptions from military service to most ultra-Orthodox students. Amid a rising manpower shortfall, the military said that it needs 12,000 more soldiers to fill its ranks.

Footage Shows Hamas Staging Discovery of Deceased Captive

A drone video released by Tel Aviv showed Hamas operatives temporarily burying a body to stage the discovery of a deceased hostage. Citing this act as a ceasefire violation and alleging an separate attack on its soldiers, Israeli forces carried out deadly overnight airstrikes on Gaza.



Before the drone footage ends, one Hamas operative, who was previously seen shovelling dirt in the pit, appeared to take photographs or videos with his phone of the partially unearthed white bag. Israeli military forces accused Hamas of trying “to create a false impression” of efforts to locate the hostages’ bodies. Photo: Israel Defence Forces

Turkish Referee Betting Scandal Exposed, 150 Named

In a scandal which has shaken the fiery world of Turkish football, the sport’s governing body in the nation named more than 150 referees suspected of betting on matches. Among them were several top-tier officials, who were allowed to take matches in Turkey's top division.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

Bridging the Gulf: The Engine Behind the UAE’s AI Vision

Be part of the conversation on Stargate — the UAE’s landmark supercomputing project, set to become the world’s largest artificial intelligence (AI) cluster outside the United States. Discover how it advances Abu Dhabi’s Vision 2031 and the National AI Strategy 2031, driving digital sovereignty, economic diversification, and regional AI leadership. Join this online lecture, held via Zoom on Thursday, 6 November, from 3pm to 4pm (SGT). Don’t miss out — register [here](#).



‘We the UAE 2031’ vision is a national plan guiding the country’s development over the next decade, focusing on social, economic, investment, and development priorities. Photo: UAE Media Office

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Iraq Heads to the Polls on 11 November

The stakes are high for Baghdad’s balancing act between Washington and Tehran as this vote will serve as a crucial test of whether this strategy can secure legitimacy within Iraq’s domestic political arena. “For the US, the outcome will signal whether Baghdad remains a reliable partner capable of maintaining stability while containing the influence of armed groups. For Iraq’s political elite, the vote is about preserving access to power and resources under growing external pressure”, said analysts.



Iraq has carefully reduced its dependence on Iran while maintaining strong ties with the Islamic Republic. Photo: Canva

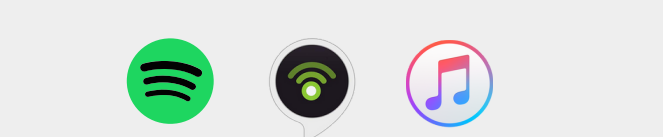
Intelligence Says Iran is Rearming Despite UN Sanctions

European intelligence reports that since the “snapback” mechanism was triggered at the end of September, several shipments of 2,000 tons of sodium perchlorate from China have arrived at Iran’s Bandar Abbas port. The chemical, used in mid-range missile fuel, is believed to be part of Tehran’s efforts to rebuild its missile stockpiles following the 12-day conflict with Israel.



The Islamic Republic terminated the 2015 deal under which sanctions were lifted in return for curbs on country’s nuclear programme on 18 October 2025. Photo: AFP

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