

MEIWeekly.



Israeli settlers torched a mosque and sprayed it with graffiti in the occupied West Bank on Thursday before morning prayers, Palestinian authorities reported. It was the latest in a surge of increasingly brazen settler attacks. Photo: AFP

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

READ: MEI Research Fellow Lin Jing reviews Jonathan Fulton’s ‘Building the Belt and Road Initiative in the Arab World: China’s Middle East Math’, evaluating its coverage of evolving Sino-Arab relations Read it [here](#).

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Israeli Settlers Torch West Bank Mosque

Fire from the arson attack destroyed Qurans, blackened walls, and burned prayer rugs. The settlers also sprayed graffiti cursing the Prophet Muhammad on the mosque’s outer walls. As the attack drew global condemnation, the Israeli military said it was investigating the incident.

Syria’s Leaders Pledge to Join Fight Against Islamic State

As Syrian President Ahmed al-Shara visited the White House for the first time on Monday and met US President Donald Trump, his administration revealed that he had signed a declaration of political cooperation with the American-led global coalition to fight the Islamic State (Isis).



Monday’s meeting between both leaders marked the first-ever visit of a Syrian President to the White House and represented a significant step in restoring bilateral relations — particularly striking given that Mr al-Sharaa was formerly an al-Qaeda commander and had only recently been removed from the US’ terrorism blacklist. Photo: AFP

Turkey Bans 102 Footballers Over Betting Scandal

The list of suspended footballers included 25 players from the top-flight Super Lig and 77 from the first division. Among those sanctioned was defending champions Galatasaray’s defender, Eren Elmali, who was pulled from the national team due to his alleged involvement.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

S R Nathan Distinguished Lecture 2025

Saudi Arabia’s “Mega Makeover” takes centre stage at MEI’s S R Nathan Lecture this year, showcasing the Kingdom’s bold transformation — from the rise of women’s participation in the workforce to ambitious giga-projects turning its cities into global hubs for investment, tourism, and entertainment. This year’s guest speaker, Mr Mohammed Khalid Alyahya (pictured), Adviser to Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister, will share insights on these revolutionary changes and how Riyadh is branding itself as a regional beacon of progress. This event will be held in-person and online via Zoom on Monday, 1 December, from 4pm – 5:30pm (SGT). Secure your spot [here](#) before seats are gone.



This lecture will also highlight how investors and firms from abroad can engage with the Kingdom’s increasingly open business environment. Photo: MEI

The Prince and The President: US-Saudi Relations

Take this as your primer for the S R Nathan Lecture! MEI will host experts on Saudi foreign policy to discuss Riyadh’s evolving partnership with Washington — which has transcended the security dimension — ahead of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s visit to the White House. What could be behind the timing of his visit? Hear from the experts themselves. This lecture will held via Zoom on Wednesday, 19 November, from 3pm to 4:15pm (SGT). Sign up [here](#).



The Kingdom’s partnership with Washington is central to its foreign policy, which in turn is crucial to its key objectives of Vision 2030. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Water Crisis Grips Tehran, Evacuation May Be Necessary

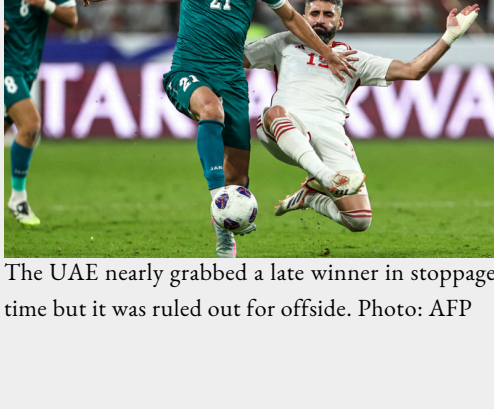
Authorities are scrambling to provide drinking water across the nation, particularly in Tehran, as Iranian grapple with the effects of multiple ongoing crises. If there is no rain by next month, water will have to be rationed in Tehran; in fact, the city of 10 million may even have to be evacuated, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a speech last week.



Iran is grappling with its sixth consecutive year of drought while heatwaves pushed temperatures above 50 degrees Celsius during summer. Photo: Canva

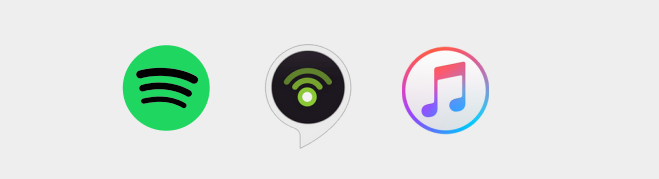
UAE-Iraq: Second Leg to Decide Fifa World Cup Playoff Spot

After a 1-1 draw in the first leg of their 2026 World Cup qualifying playoff in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, both nations will meet again in the return leg next Tuesday in the Iraqi port city of Basra. The winner will advance to Fifa’s intercontinental playoff in March, where six teams from five confederations will compete for two spots at next summer’s expanded 48-team World Cup, co-hosted by the US, Canada, and Mexico.

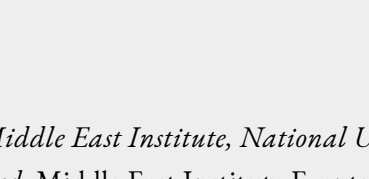


The UAE nearly grabbed a late winner in stoppage time but it was ruled out for offside. Photo: AFP

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