

# MEIWeekly.



Speaking alongside MEI Chairman Joseph Liow (right) at the S R Nathan Lecture on Monday, advisor to Saudi Arabia's foreign minister and this year's guest speaker, Mr Mohammed Khalid Alyahya, hailed Singapore's transformation and said that the Kingdom had been echoing that model under its Vision 2030 plan. Photo: MEI

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

**READ:** The Gaza war may be over but it has set the Middle East on a new collision course — from Qatar to Iran, states are now racing to recalibrate security and alliances. Dive into this MEI Perspective [here](#).

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

### Saudi Adviser Lauds Parallels with Singapore at MEI Lecture

While describing the late former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's pragmatic, results-driven governance as a template for Riyadh's ambitions, he also invited Singaporean firms to invest in Saudi's tourism boom expected after the Expo 2030 world fair and the 2034 Fifa World Cup.

### UAE-Backed Separatist Forces Sweep Into Yemen

The separatist group seized control of much of Hadramout and were battling to secure the region's oil fields, local residents and the group's officials said. This rapid offensive marked a potential turning point, which could eventually lead to the country's division into two states.



This new fighting underscores simmering tensions between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which borders Hadramout and has cultivated deep influence there. Both are allies and once led a military coalition in Yemen against the Houthis, but in recent years they have diverged in their foreign policies, backing rival powers in Sanaa. Photo: AFP

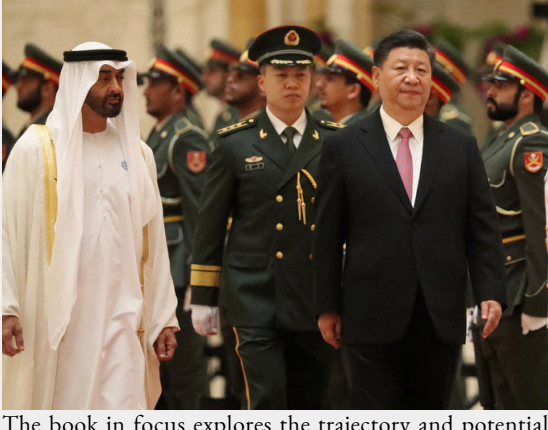
### Netanyahu Requests Presidential Pardon in Corruption Case

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he believed that canceling his trial would help heal the divisions in Jewish society. He referred to US President Donald Trump's equally extraordinary interventions on his behalf two weeks ago as justification for seeking a pardon.

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### [Book Talk] Narratives of Sino-Middle Eastern Futures

Join MEI and the authors of Narratives of Sino-Middle Eastern Futures to explore whether the Middle East is entering a post-American era under Chinese influence or if that connection remains fundamentally transactional. Drawing on multilingual sources from 2010 to 2023 and using a thin constructivist framework, the discussion examines Saudi, Syrian, and Chinese elite perspectives on the regional order and Beijing's envisioned role within it. This event will be held online via Zoom on Tuesday, 9 December 2025, from 4pm – 5pm (SGT). Sign up [here](#).



The book in focus explores the trajectory and potential endpoint of Sino-Middle Eastern relations. Photo: AFP

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### Iran to Attend Fifa World Cup Draw after Boycott Threat

An Iranian delegation will attend Friday's 2026 World Cup draw after initially saying it would boycott the ceremony in Washington over visa issues, media reports said on Thursday. Tehran applied for nine visas for its delegation, but Iranian football federation (Ffiri) spokesman Amir Mehdi Alavi was quoted as saying that the US granted only four, including one for head coach Amir Ghalenoei. Mehdi Taj, president of the Ffiri, was not granted a visa.



Iran will play its fourth straight World Cup finals when the tournament takes place. Photo: Canva

### Turkey Building a Submarine

Turkey's defence ministry said on Thursday that construction had begun on its first indigenous submarine (Milden), and announced that Ankara had also completed its first sale of a corvette warship to a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) ally after signing an agreement with Romania. The country said last week that contractors had started work on its indigenous TF-2000 naval air-defence destroyer. The vessel will form part of the planned "Steel Dome" multi-layered air-defence system.



Ankara is ramping up its homemade defence industry production and reducing its reliance on foreign suppliers. Photo: Canva

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