

MEIWeekly.



The United States and Iran concluded a day of high-stakes diplomatic talks in Geneva yesterday, with negotiations to avert war and reach an agreement on Tehran’s nuclear programme to continue next week. Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, who was mediating, said on social media that significant progress was made. Photo: X / Oman Foreign Ministry

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

READ: As the US mulls a strike on Iran, MEI’s *Heard@theSouq* explores how a potential attack could reshape borders, alliances, nuclear ambitions, and ignite a new security race. Read the article [here](#).

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

No Breakthrough in US-Iran Talks, Negotiations to Continue

Iranian officials and Omani mediators said both sides agreed to continue talks next week to avert war. It was notable that the White House and both American negotiators - US Middle East Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner - remained silent about the current status.

Israel Charges Intelligence Agent for Smuggling Goods Into Gaza

This case was the first public instance in which an agent of Israel’s Shin Bet faced such charges. It added to a growing list of cases involving Israeli citizens, including military reservists, who have been accused of exploiting their roles in delivering aid to Gaza for their personal gain.



One reservist charged was the brother of David Zini (pictured), who was named head of the agency in October by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Critics called the allegation “an embarrassment for Israel”. Photo: AFP

Syria Reports ‘Mass Escape’ from Isis-Linked Camp

Syrian TV reported last month that a “mass escape” occurred at the al-Hol camp, which houses families linked to the Islamic State (Isis), after Kurdish forces withdrew. US intelligence sources said that 15,000 to 20,000 people, including Isis affiliates, are now at large after this incident.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ICYMI: Narratives of Sino-Middle Eastern Futures

Missed this book talk? MEI hosted the authors of ‘Narratives of Sino-Middle Eastern Futures’ to examine whether the region is moving towards a post-American Chinese hegemony or reaching the limits of transactional ties. Drawing on multilingual sources and thin constructivism, the discussion encompassed Saudi, Syrian, and Chinese elite narratives on the Middle Eastern order and Beijing’s role within it. You can now catch the video of the event or the podcast [here](#).



China surpassed the West to become the Gulf’s top trading partner in 2024, with economic ties expected to grow further in the coming years. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Abu Dhabi State Oil Company Looks Beyond Oil

Having reshaped the company, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (pictured) is steering Adnoc — Abu Dhabi’s national energy company, founded in 1971 — towards international expansion. Moving beyond oil, the company is entering a risky phase, pursuing acquisitions in natural gas, chemicals, renewables, and other sectors, with ambitions to rank among the world’s top five natural energy suppliers.



While some lauded the progress under the minister, industry experts say Adnoc “may be trying to do too much, too fast”. Photo: AFP

India-Israel to Boost Defence Cooperation After Modi’s Visit

Both nations will pursue joint development, production and transfer of technology in defence, as well as work on a free trade agreement, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday. Israel would also allow 50,000 additional Indian workers into the country over the next five years, especially in manufacturing sectors, the statement said.

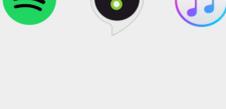


Mr Modi was visiting Israel for two days from 25 to 26 February 2026 to deepen trade and defence ties. Photo: AFP

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