

# MEIWeekly.



United States President Donald Trump said on Thursday that Washington and Tehran were “very close” to a peace deal and that Iran had agreed to hand over its enriched uranium, a key sticking point in negotiations. The US had earlier threatened to resume strikes on Iran and maintain a naval blockade of its ports if it refused a deal. Photo: AFP

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

**READ:** Does ‘*The Dragon’s Reach: China’s Rise as an Imperial Power in the Middle East*’ nail its assessment of Beijing’s soft-power strategy in the region? Read this book review [here](#).

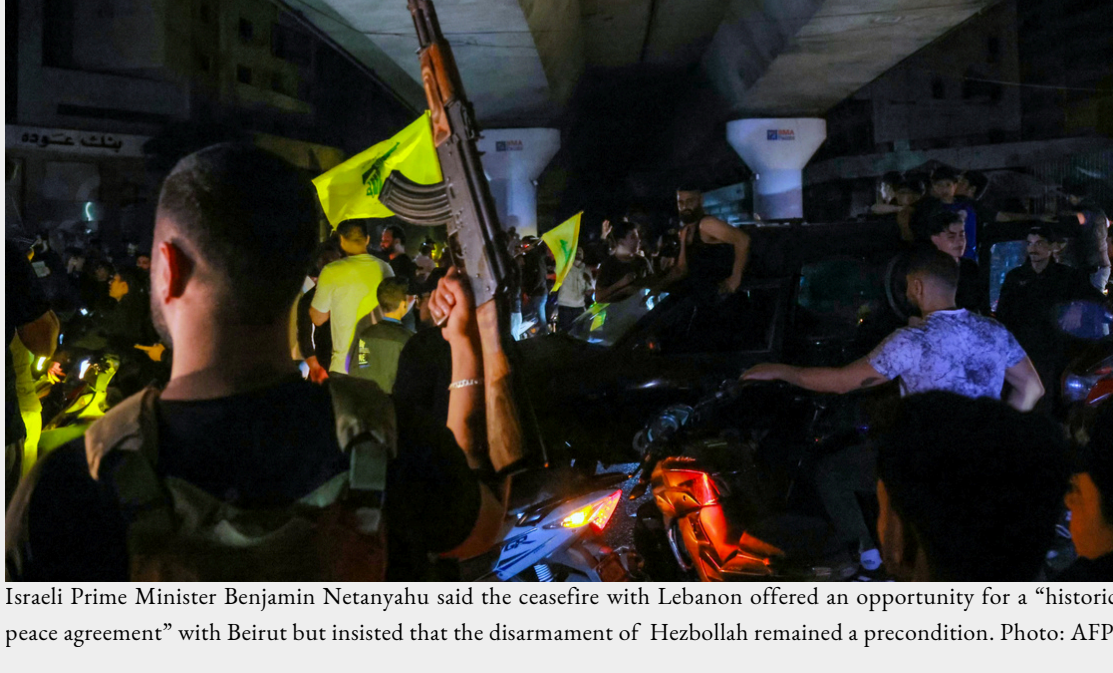
## WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

### Iran Agrees to Hand Over Enriched Uranium, Says Trump

Although Iran has not confirmed the claim, if accurate, it would mark a significant step in US efforts to curb Tehran’s ability to produce a nuclear weapon. There would “probably” be another round of in-person talks “maybe over the weekend”, President Trump told reporters.

### 10-Day Ceasefire Between Israel and Lebanon Takes Effect

The truce came as Washington stepped up efforts to reach a deal to end the war with Tehran, with Iran insisting Lebanon must be part of any agreement. Mr Trump also said he was trying to set up the first-ever face-to-face meeting between the leaders of the two countries in the US.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the ceasefire with Lebanon offered an opportunity for a “historic peace agreement” with Beirut but insisted that the disarmament of Hezbollah remained a precondition. Photo: AFP

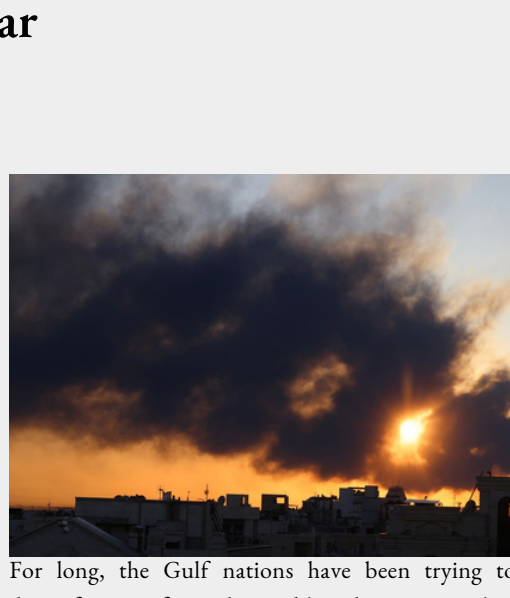
### Riyadh Resets Priorities After Decades of Heavy Spending

After signalling a step back from costly mega-projects with uncertain or limited returns in recent times, Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund said it will prioritise domestic investments under a new five-year strategy. This pivot gained urgency amid pressures stemming from the Iran war.

## CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

### ICMYI: Gulf States Amid the Iran War

The guns may have fallen silent — for now. But the Gulf is still grappling with the fallout of missile and drone attacks, which exposed the region’s vulnerabilities. Missed this? Catch the key insights from MEI’s recent webinar, where regional experts unpacked what this means for the Gulf’s trajectory — now available as a recap video and podcast [here](#).



For long, the Gulf nations have been trying to diversify away from their oil-based economies but the Iran war has forced them to reboot. Photo: AFP

## LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

### Team Melli to Feature in the World Cup, Says Fifa President

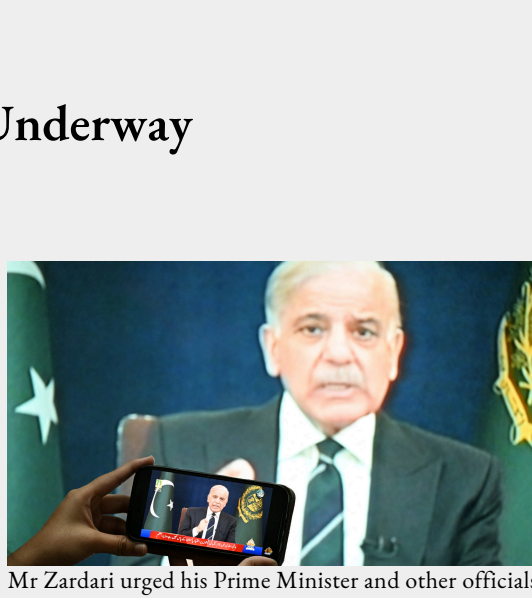
Fifa President Gianni Infantino said on Wednesday that the “Iranian team is coming, for sure” to play in the World Cup in the US this summer. “We hope that by then, of course, the situation will be a peaceful situation. As I said, that would definitely help. But Iran has to come”, he added. This was despite President Trump saying earlier that it would not be “appropriate” for Iran to participate in the tournament this summer and that it may be a risk for the players’ “own life and safety”.



Tehran said it was negotiating with Fifa to move its matches from the US to Mexico. Photo: AFP

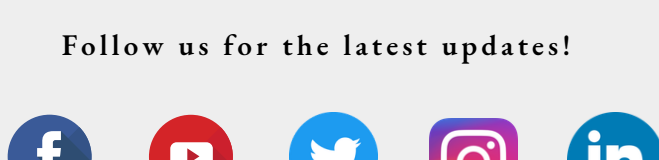
### Pakistani PM’s Visit to Middle East Underway

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (pictured) is on a four-day diplomatic tour to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey as his bid to moderate the second round of peace talks between the US and Iran appears to gather momentum. Pakistan’s President Asif Ali Zardari said in a statement that Mr Sharif briefed him on his drive to discuss the issue with fellow mediators and to secure further negotiations.



Mr Zardari urged his Prime Minister and other officials to remain engaged with the US, Iran and other key powers to try to sustain the peace process. Photo:AFP

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