

MEIWeekly.



On Thursday, United States President Donald Trump ordered American naval forces to attack any Iranian boats laying mines in the Strait of Hormuz. Blaming what he described as a “lack of clear leadership in Tehran”, he also declined to give a timeline for resolving the war, telling reporters at the White House: “Don’t rush me”. Photo: AFP

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

READ: Are the Gulf, India, and China misreading the oil shock from the Iran war as temporary, when it could actually mean a longer, structural disruption? Read this article in [Heard@theSouq here](#).

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Trump Issues ‘Shoot and Kill’ Order on Iranian Boats

A day after Tehran displayed its ability to thwart traffic through the Strait of Hormuz again, President Donald Trump ordered the US military to attack small Iranian boats, which deploy mines in the waterway. He added that US minesweepers “are clearing the strait right now”.

Lebanon and Israel Agree to ‘Ceasefire’ Extension

Mr Trump said both sides agreed to extend a truce between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah by three weeks after talks at the White House. Amid multiple reports of violations in the initial ceasefire, he insisted that Israel has a right to defend itself “if they’re shot at, and they will.”



Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar urged Beirut to cooperate on disarming Hezbollah, while Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said Lebanon was seeking an end to Tel Aviv’s demolition of homes in villages and towns. Photo: AFP

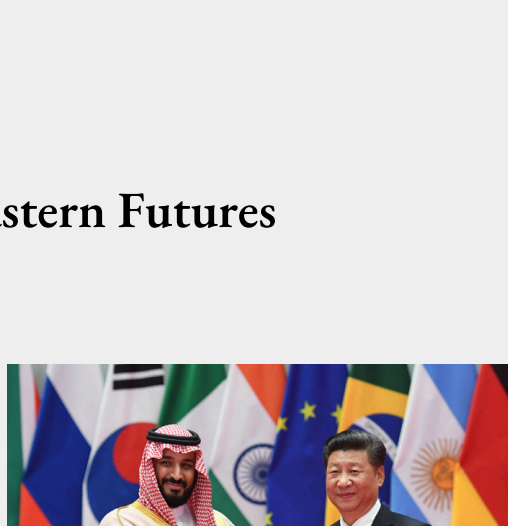
Middle East War Forces Reckoning on Qatar

A close US ally and long-time mediator between Washington and Tehran, Doha faced more than 700 Iranian missile and drone attacks and was forced to suspend its natural gas production. Its case reflected the thorny position Gulf countries have been in during the war.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ICMYI: 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](#).

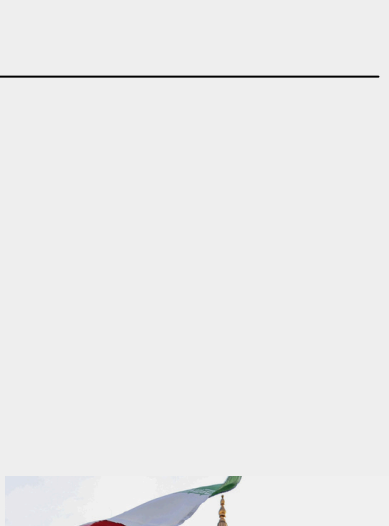


China surpassed the West to become the Gulf’s top trading partner in 2024, with economic ties expected to grow further in the coming years. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

‘Tehran’s Tollbooth’

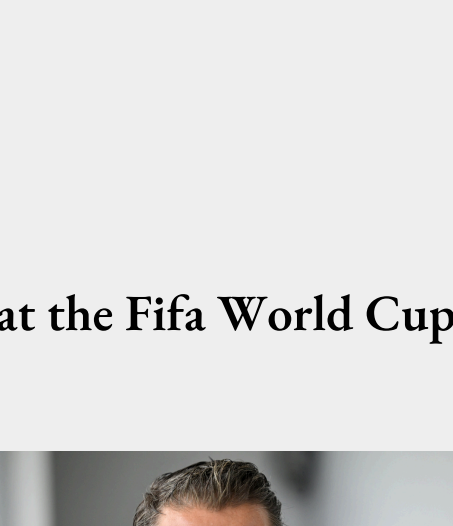
Iran banked the first proceeds from the tolls it is exacting on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, an official said on 23 April. The nation’s plan to maintain a chokehold on the strait by extracting a payment of \$2million - payable in Chinese yuan or cryptocurrency - from each passing tanker could lead to higher prices for years to come. Shipping companies are likely to charge higher rates to use their tankers via a route where the risk of attack is substantially greater. Insurers are likely to charge higher premiums too.



Iran suggested this toll money would be used for reconstruction. Photo: AFP

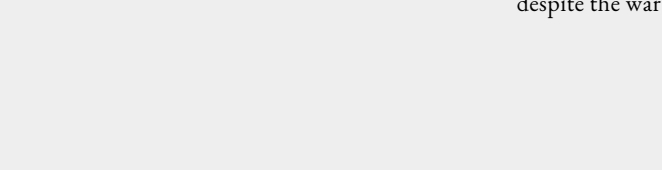
Italy to Replace the Islamic Republic at the Fifa World Cup?

Italian sports officials say the four-time champion is not interested in replacing Iran at the upcoming Fifa World Cup following a suggestion to that effect by US Special Envoy for Global Partnerships Paolo Zampolli (pictured). “I would feel offended”, said an Italian sports official, adding that “you need to deserve to go to the World Cup”. Italy’s Finance Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti called the suggested swap “shameful”.



Iran has not withdrawn from the tournament and the team is preparing to play in the US despite the war in the Middle East. Photo: AFP

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