

MEIWeekly.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered his government to begin negotiations with Lebanon, a day after Tel Aviv's deadly attacks on the nation killed hundreds and threatened a fragile United States-Iran truce. His remarks came after US President Donald Trump asked him to pull back on Israel's barrage on Lebanon. Photo: AFP

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

READ: Caught in the fallout of the Middle East war, this MEI Perspective argues that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states must reboot their economic vision for a region defined by recurring disruption. Read the article [here](#).

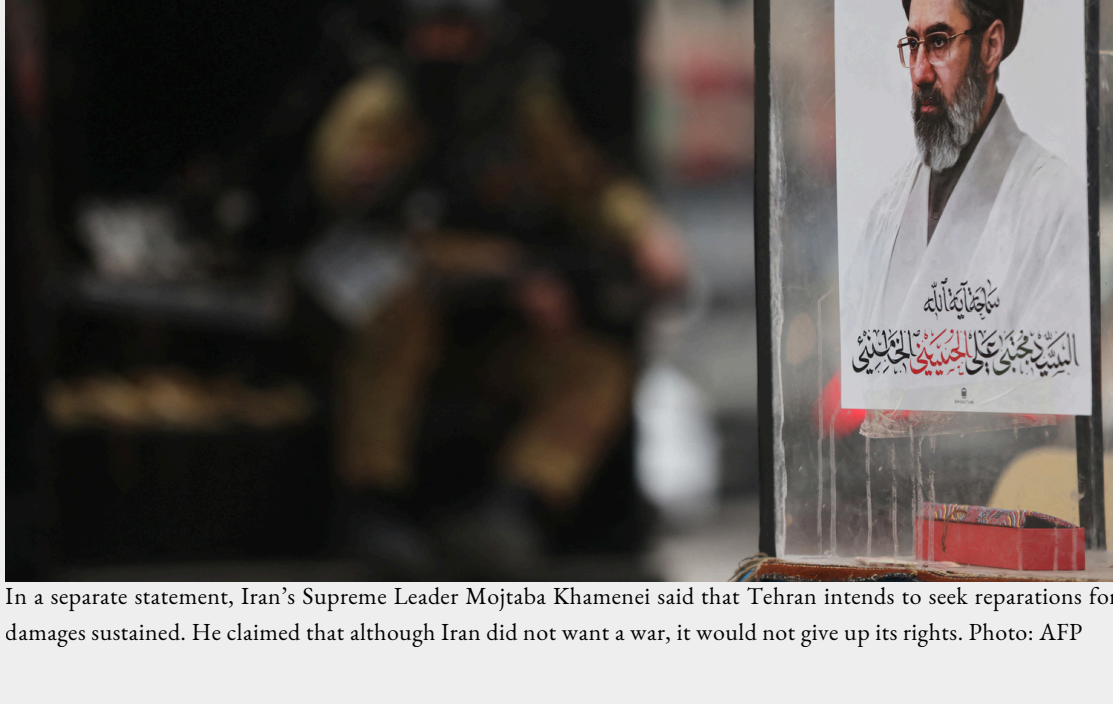
WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Disagreement Over Lebanon Threatens to Break Iran Ceasefire

Israel continued to bombard Lebanon less than 24 hours after Iran and the US agreed to a ceasefire, which Tehran and Pakistan said included Beirut. The US and Israel argued otherwise, while Tehran called the attacks a “grave violation” and warned of a strong response.

Trump Demands Tehran Stop Charging Tolls for Hormuz

“Iran better stop now if it’s charging fees to oil tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz”, President Trump warned. This came after reports surfaced that the Islamic Republic was charging shipping firms fees, to be paid in cryptocurrency, to allow their vessels to sail through.



In a separate statement, Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said that Tehran intends to seek reparations for damages sustained. He claimed that although Iran did not want a war, it would not give up its rights. Photo: AFP

China's Hand in Truce

Iranian officials credited a last-minute push by Beijing for securing their acceptance of the ceasefire, a claim later validated by Mr Trump. Pakistani officials reportedly told sources that while Islamabad acted as a mediator in recent talks, China served as the security “guarantor”.

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

Netanyahu's Corruption Trial to Resume on Sunday

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s long-running corruption trial will resume on Sunday, the courts’ spokesperson said on Thursday, hours after Tel Aviv lifted a state of emergency imposed over its war with Iran. He is facing charges in two cases in which he allegedly negotiated favourable media coverage from Israeli news outlets, and a third involving accusations that he accepted more than US\$260,000 in luxury gifts from billionaires in exchange for political favours.



The trial will begin with a hearing, which is set to include testimony from a defence witness. Photo: AFP

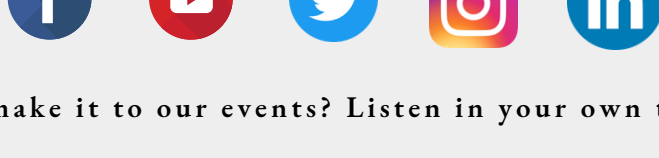
Pakistan to Host Peace Talks

US Vice President JD Vance (pictured) will lead an American delegation — including special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner — for talks with Iranian officials in Pakistan tomorrow, as Israeli strikes in Lebanon test a fragile ceasefire. The discussions are expected to focus on Iran’s nuclear enrichment and ballistic missile programmes, as well as tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.



Iranian officials are seeking a guarantee from the US of a more permanent end to hostilities. Photo:AFP

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