

MEI Weekly.



The United States and Iran were reportedly close to a peace deal on Thursday before both sides exchanged fire in the Strait of Hormuz, threatening a shaky ceasefire. Each side claimed that the other fired first, with Washington saying its forces intercepted “unprovoked Iranian attacks”, while Tehran claimed the US targeted its tanker. Photo: AFP

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

READ: The Iran war has exposed the fragility of the global maritime order and the weaponisation of the Strait of Hormuz — but what does this mean for Gulf security, global trade, and the future of energy flows? Read about it in MEI’s Perspective [here](#).

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

US and Iran Trade Strikes

Dismissing the exchange as “trifle”, United States President Donald Trump maintained that the ceasefire with Tehran was still in place. Explosions were also heard in Tehran as Iranian armed forces said that Washington carried out airstrikes on Qeshm Island and two other cities.

Israel Kills Hezbollah Chief Near Beirut

In the first attack near the Lebanese capital since a US-mediated ceasefire took effect last month, the Israeli military said it killed the commander of Hezbollah’s Radwan force. This threatened an already tenuous truce, with both sides continuing to exchange daily attacks.



“This is how we act, and this is how we will continue to act,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and the country’s defence minister, Mr Israel Katz, said in a statement on Wednesday announcing the strike. Photo: AFP

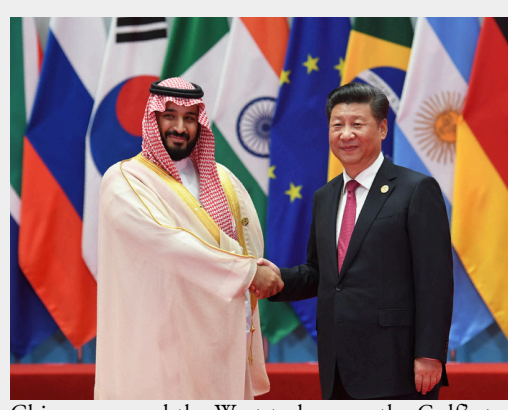
‘Project Freedom’ Shelved After Saudis’ Refusal

Riyadh reportedly told the White House it would not allow its Prince Sultan airbase to be used for tanker escort operations through the Strait of Hormuz. The Kingdom refused to drop its objections despite a call between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Mr Trump.

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

Turkey Unveils First Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

The intercontinental ballistic missile, named Yildirimhan — meaning “lightning” in Turkish — was unveiled on Tuesday at the Saha 2026 Defence and Aerospace Exhibition at the Istanbul Expo Centre. Developed by the Defence Ministry’s research and development centre, it reflected Turkey’s push for greater self-reliance and its ambition to position itself as a key defence player among its Nato allies and in the Middle East.



The Yildirimhan has a range of 6,000km, with a maximum speed of Mach 25 and a payload capacity of 3,000kg. Photo: X

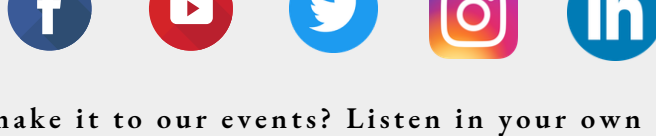
Japan, UAE to Hold Talks on Oil Supply and Joint Stockpiles

Tokyo agreed with Abu Dhabi in ministerial talks this week to advance discussions on energy cooperation, such as expanding joint crude oil stockpiles and increasing supplies, Japan’s industry ministry said on Thursday. Details such as the volume of additional stockpiles and extra UAE supplies will be discussed later, Deputy Director-general for Immediate Crisis Management at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Narumi Hosokawa told reporters.



Tokyo holds joint oil reserves in Japan with producing countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Photo: AFP

Follow us for the latest updates!



Can’t make it to our events? Listen in your own time!

