

MEIWeekly.



The United States launched new airstrikes on Iran early Thursday, prompting Tehran to retaliate against American-allied countries in the Middle East, threatening a fragile interim peace deal aimed at ending the war. These strikes came as Iran was laying its former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to rest four months after being killed. Photo: AFP

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

READ: Who won the Iran war? MEI Distinguished Fellow Bilahari Kausikan argues that fashionable narratives that Iran "won" and the US "lost" miss the point. Read his commentary [here](#).

READ: Associate Professor at Zayed University in the UAE Jonathan Fulton explores how the Iran war exposed a fragmented Gulf and the limits of China's economics-first strategy. To read, click [here](#).

READ: Think the Hormuz crisis is just about higher oil prices? Principal for South and South-east Asia Geopolitical and Country Risk at Control Risks Brian Braun writes that the bigger story is a new reality for businesses across South-east Asia. Read the Perspective [here](#).

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

US and Iran Renew Fighting

American military officials said they hit about 170 targets in Iran during strikes on Tuesday and Wednesday while Tehran claimed it responded by firing at US bases in Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. These new tit-for-tat attacks raised the prospect of a return to a full-scale war in the Middle East.

Israel Shares Intelligence of Trump Assassination Plot

Tel Aviv claimed Tehran recently devised a new plot to assassinate US President Donald Trump. Sources said Washington picked up a steady drumbeat of intelligence in recent weeks on possible Iranian assassination plans but Israel's latest warning was new and concerned a specific plot.



As details of the plot that Israel warned about were not clear, some American officials suggested that this report could be an effort to sway Mr Trump's decision-making as he weighs whether to intensify US military action in Iran. Photo: AFP

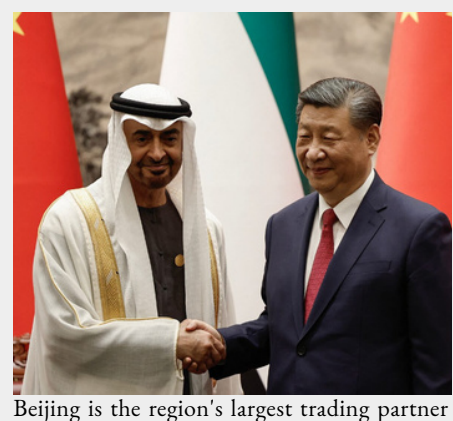
Egypt Calls for Investigation After Argentina Defeat

Cairo filed a formal complaint with Fifa over what it described as "double standards" in officiating. The Pharaohs' defeat fuelled viral claims on social media of Argentina receiving preferential treatment, with some alleging that the World Cup was "rigged" in favour of Lionel Messi's side.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

China and the GCC: Evolving Ties and Future Engagement

This seminar will examine a joint EAI-MEI monograph on the evolving relationship between China and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries prior to the current Middle East tensions. Discussions will cover political ties, trade, investment, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), diplomacy, and Gulf perceptions of China's ambitions and constraints, while exploring the future trajectory of Beijing-GCC relations. This event, held under the Chatham House Rule, will take place in person on Wednesday, 15 July 2026, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM (SGT). Click [here](#) to sign up.



Beijing is the region's largest trading partner and biggest crude oil importer. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Washington to Lift Sanctions on Turkey, Possibly Sell F-35s

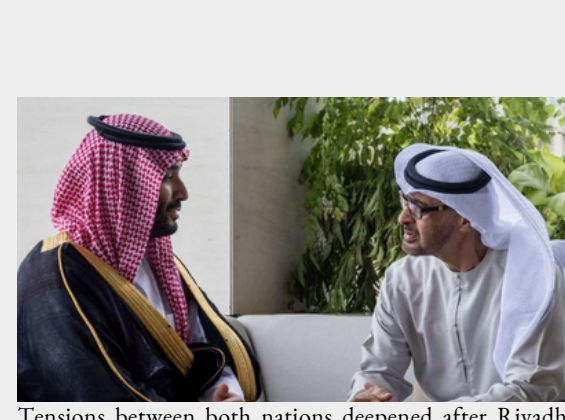
President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced that Washington would lift US sanctions on Ankara which were imposed in 2020 over Turkey's purchase of Russian defence missiles, while expressing a willingness to sell the fellow North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) ally F-35 fighter jets. This move would be a massive gesture from Mr Trump to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whom he considers a close ally and would remove a major long-standing irritant in bilateral ties.



Mr Trump said that his secretary of state and treasury secretary were working on the issue. Photo: Twitter

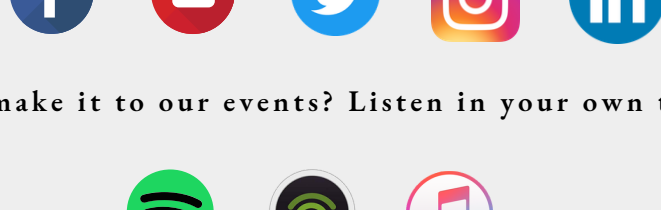
Saudi Arabia Blocking Payments to UAE Accounts

Saudi banks have been blocking or delaying financial transfers from the Kingdom to accounts based in the UAE, raising concerns among businesses that friction between the Gulf powerhouses is spilling over into trade. Multiple people reported that payments from Saudi entities to the UAE accounts of companies and individuals based in Dubai had since May either been returned or delayed by the Kingdom's banks without any clear explanation.



Tensions between both nations deepened after Riyadh accused UAE of backing Yemeni separatists. Photo: AFP

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Our mailing address is:
 Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore
 29 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
 Block B, #06-06
 Singapore 119620
 Singapore

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