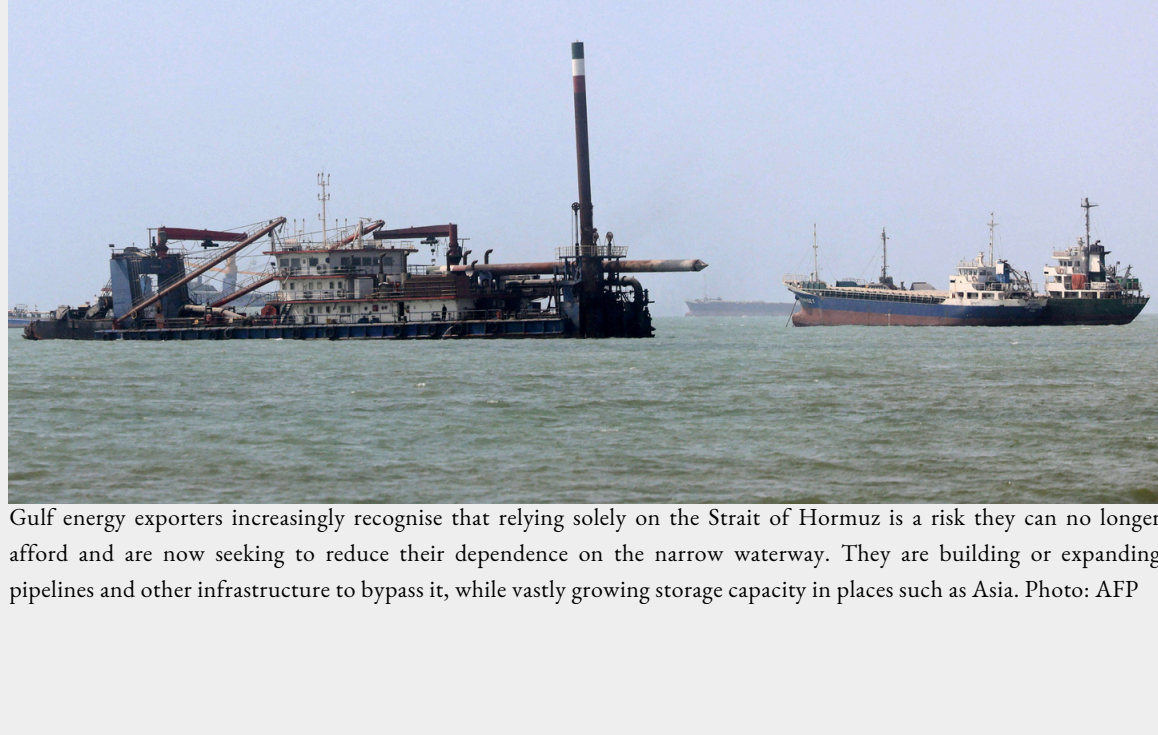


MEIWeekly.



Gulf energy exporters increasingly recognise that relying solely on the Strait of Hormuz is a risk they can no longer afford and are now seeking to reduce their dependence on the narrow waterway. They are building or expanding pipelines and other infrastructure to bypass it, while vastly growing storage capacity in places such as Asia. Photo: AFP

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

READ: MEI Executive Director Michelle Teo rounds up the institute's top highlights from July in one convenient monthly overview. To read, click [here](#).

READ: As the Gulf nations search for alternatives to US security guarantees, MEI Research Fellow Jia Liu examines why its largest trading partner - China - remains unlikely to fill the gap. Read the piece [here](#).

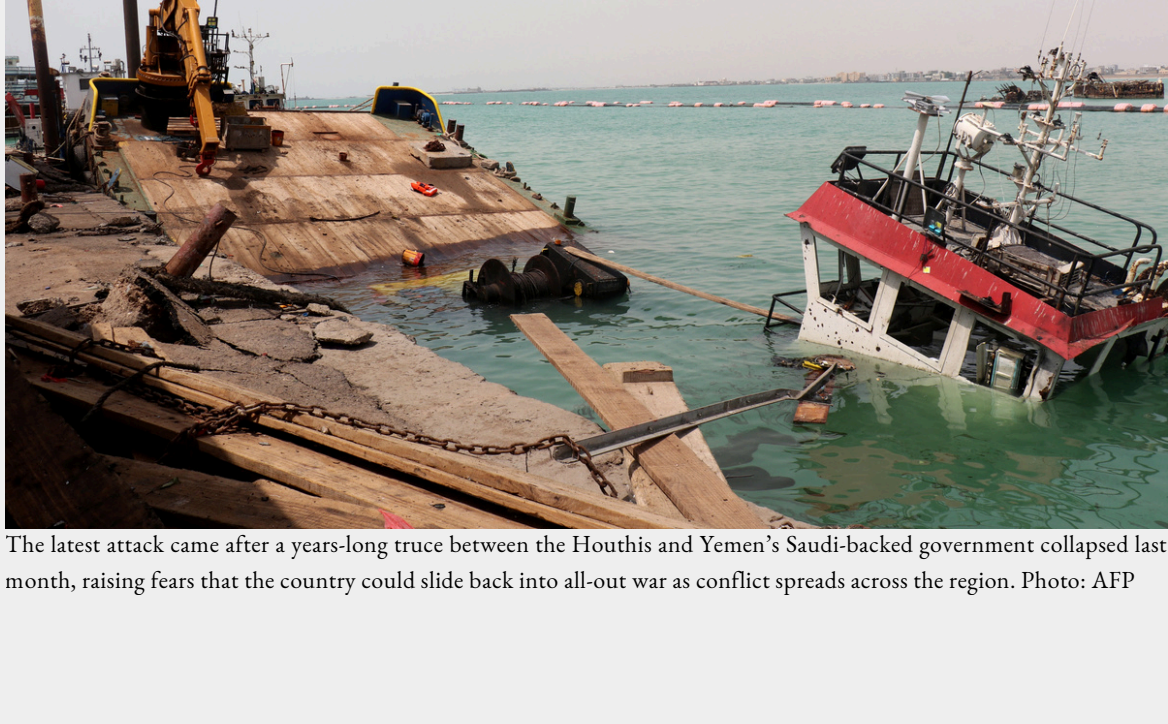
WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Gulf Nations Accept New Normal in Hormuz

Persian Gulf energy producers are concluding that Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz will become permanent, disrupting their oil and gas exports and global energy supplies indefinitely. Even as they dislike an emerging deal to reopen the vital waterway, they see it as the better alternative than a return to war.

Houthi Strike Cargo Ship and Rescuers in Red Sea

Six people were killed and 10 injured in strikes by Iran-backed Houthis on a cargo ship in the Red Sea, the internationally recognised Yemeni government reported. The rebels claimed they were targeting a ship carrying Saudi military equipment after announcing a naval blockade last month.



The latest attack came after a years-long truce between the Houthis and Yemen's Saudi-backed government collapsed last month, raising fears that the country could slide back into all-out war as conflict spreads across the region. Photo: AFP

Trump Secretly Switches Planes to Avoid Iran Threat

US President Donald Trump was transported to and from his aircraft in a catering truck amid credible intelligence of an Iranian missile threat to Air Force One. The optics of him hiding from the threat in a catering truck were less than ideal for a president who has repeatedly touted his strength.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

MEI-Bisa Seminar Series 2026

This four-part seminar series, a collaboration between the Middle East Institute and the British International Studies Association (Bisa), will examine the cascading consequences of the US-Israeli war against Iran that erupted in early 2026. From Iran's domestic political transformation and the reshaping of Gulf regional security and economies to disruptions in global energy markets and beyond, leading scholars from institutions around the world will offer a comprehensive, multi-layered analysis of this major geopolitical crisis and its far-reaching implications. The first session, "The War and Shifting Political Landscape in Iran", will take place on Tuesday, 22 September 2026, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM (SGT). Click [here](#) to sign up now.



Pre-war public dissent in Tehran has largely been redirected towards resistance against foreign invasion, signalling a notable shift in the nation. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Erdogan Wants Defence Pact to Draw More Countries

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is hoping that more countries join a defence agreement signed last week between Ankara, Riyadh and Islamabad aimed at stabilising a region wracked by conflict. This so-called Mecca Joint Defence Agreement was signed last week as the Middle East grapples with the fallout from the US-Iran war, which has dragged in regional players and disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. Some analysts question whether the pact represents a US-backed security architecture or merely complements existing American partnerships.



Turkey seeks to increase defence exports and expand joint production with Gulf monarchies. Photo: AFP

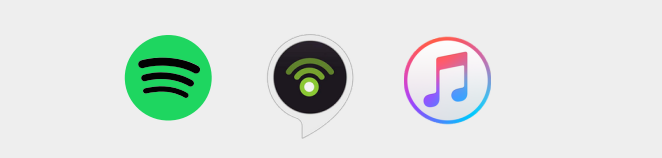
Egypt Pitches New Experiences to China

Cairo is seeking to attract more Chinese travellers by expanding its tourism offerings beyond its iconic ancient sites as the two nations mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year. A tourism trade roadshow themed "New Egypt, New Paradise" was held at Xiamen Air Carnival Hotel in Beijing's Fengtai district, bringing together tourism industry representatives from both countries.



In recent years, Egypt has sought to diversify its appeal beyond traditional heritage tours. Photo: AFP

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