

MEIWeekly.



The Iran-backed Houthi militia captured a strategic Red Sea port city on Thursday in a sweeping ground offensive, which could give the group greater control over an important shipping route and further destabilise energy markets. The rebels pushed out forces allied with the Yemeni government, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, according to reports. Photo: AFP

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

READ: In *Heard@theSouq*, Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation Middle East Cauvery Ganapathy writes that the recently-signed US-Saudi nuclear deal could set off a dangerous precedent that risks driving regional proliferation across the Middle East. To read, click [here](#).

READ: This article analyses how the failure of Israeli defences on 7 October and the containment of Iranian retaliation in the current war transformed the rules of military engagement in the Middle East. Read the piece [here](#).

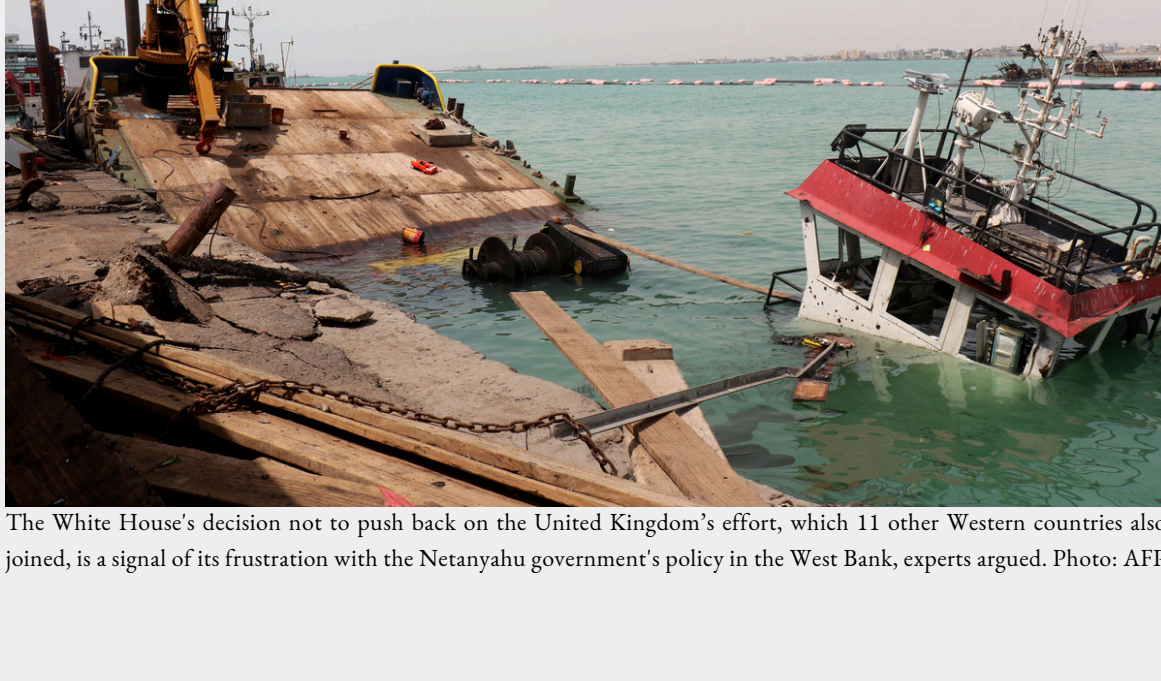
WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Houthis Seize Strategic Red Sea Port

For Saudi Arabia and its Yemeni allies, the capture of Mokha was a major setback, raising questions about their ability to constrain the Houthis. For the rebels, taking the port was a significant victory. It also puts an ally of Tehran one step closer to controlling a key maritime choke point.

Europe Unites to Pressure Israel as US Offers Muted Response

The British government announced, followed by France and Canada, that it would stop trading with Jewish settlements in the West Bank. It went so far as to accuse some settlers of engaging in the “ethnic cleansing” of Palestinians. Israel responded with fury and countermeasures on its own.



The White House's decision not to push back on the United Kingdom's effort, which 11 other Western countries also joined, is a signal of its frustration with the Netanyahu government's policy in the West Bank, experts argued. Photo: AFP

Iran Conflict Could Last Beyond Trump's Presidency

Sources reported US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio privately warned President Donald Trump that the war with Iran could extend through the remainder of his presidency. Mr Trump earlier said that he expects the war will end “immediately” after midterm elections this fall.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

MEI-Bisa Seminar Series 2026

The US–Israeli war against Iran upended Tehran's domestic political landscape, reshaping public dissent, disrupting established power structures and forcing anti-government movements to navigate both state repression and foreign intervention. With senior leaders eliminated and new political figures emerging, questions remain over who will shape Iran's future and whether the country can maintain political cohesion during and after the war. This seminar examines these shifts and what they could mean for Tehran's post-war political trajectory. This event will take place on Tuesday, 22 September 2026, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM (SGT). To register, click [here](#).

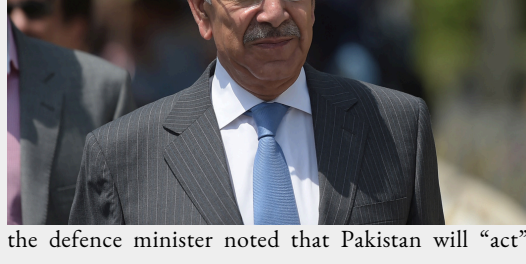


Tehran responded to Washington's aggression by attacking US military bases in the Gulf. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Islamabad Warns Attack on Riyadh Could Trigger Mecca Pact

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif (pictured) said that the recently-signed Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan defence pact or Mecca agreement could become operational if Riyadh faces “unprovoked aggression” or the conflict in Yemen spills into the Kingdom, a day after Iran-aligned Houthi forces launched attacks on the Gulf nation's territory. The joint defence agreement signed last month stipulates that an armed attack on any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack on all of them.



the defence minister noted that Pakistan will “act” when the “time comes”, sources reported. Photo: AFP

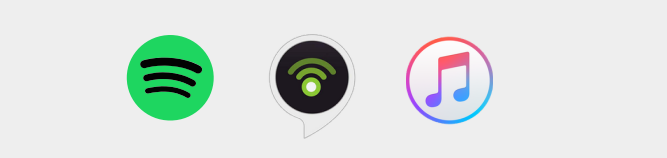
ISD: Terrorism Threat Remains High Due to Middle East Wars

A volatile global security environment fuelled by the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East is contributing to the high terrorism threat facing Singapore, said the Internal Security Department (ISD). In its annual terrorism report, the ISD said terrorist and extremist groups have exploited the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iran war to spread propaganda and incite their supporters to mount attacks against their perceived enemies. The report noted that tensions in the Middle East have contributed to growing hostilities between communities, and anti-semitism has surged in many parts of the world. Meanwhile, anti-Muslim rhetoric and Islamophobia have also intensified.



Conflicts have in part contributed to an increase in youth radicalisation cases dealt with under the Internal Security Act (ISA) in the nation. Photo: AFP

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