MEIWeekly.



Widely interpreted as an effort to distance himself from US President Donald Trump ahead of a potential 2028 White House run, Vice President JD Vance on Wednesday placed the blame for Republicans' wipeout in the mid-term elections on the war with Iran. He also added that America's relationship with Israel was a key factor in their heavy loss. Photo: AFP

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

READ: MEI Executive Director Michelle Teo drops her picks of the month from August to October in case they slipped past your radar or if you want to revisit. For more, click **here**.

READ: Does Indonesia's signing of the Badr MoU with Qatar, Turkey, and Pakistan signal a major shift in its Middle East policy? Read this latest Heard@theSouq piece **here**.

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

In Rebuke to Iran War and Israel Ties, Democrats Win Elections

In Mr Vance's social media post, he said many voters who had supported Mr Trump turned to Democratic candidates for several reasons, including the war, inflation and a desire to change the country's relationship with Israel. Mr. Trump told reporters that deputy's assessment was "largely true".

67 Lawmakers Recommend Eisenkot to Be Next Prime Minister

Opposition leader Gadi Eisenkot led Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in recommendations to form a new government by a vote of 67 to 46, with seven abstentions. Israeli President Isaac Herzog said he will announce on Sunday who will be tasked with forming the country's new government.



Mr Herzog said that while the "results of the consultations may appear clear", there were "mutual vetoes between the blocs and within the blocs themselves" that make it difficult to say who has the best shot to form a new government. Photo: AFP

Washington Strikes Tehran's Qeshm Island

Characterising the action as defensive in nature and meant to protect American assets in the region, Washington carried out limited strikes on Iran's Qeshm Island on Monday. This move came on the eve of the US mid-term elections and was meant to be a reminder that the crisis in Iran is still unresolved.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

ICYMI: S R Nathan Distinguished Lecture 2026

In his lecture at MEI's flagship event, Visiting S Rajaratnam Professor of Strategic Studies Vali Nasr examined Iran's post-war trajectory following the conflicts of 2025–2026. Against the backdrop of an impending political transition and severe domestic strains, the conversation explored three central pillars: the evolution of governance within the Islamic Republic, economic reconstruction, and the realignment of Tehran's regional and global foreign policy. If you missed this event, you can watch or listen to the the full lecture **here**.



Professor Nasr and MEI Chairman Joseph Liow also discussed about US-Israeli miscalculations in Iran and Washington's failures, among other topics. Photo: MEI

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Syria Weighs Joining Saudi Mutual Defence Pact

Syria is considering joining a regional defence alliance with Saudi Arabia, said its Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani (pictured), raising the prospect that Damascus could become involved in the Kingdom's widening conflict with the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen. The foreign minister told the Manama Dialogue security conference in Bahrain that "discussions are currently underway to evaluate Syria's entry into the Mecca alliance", referring to the Mecca pact signed in August by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan.



Under the terms of the pact, an armed attack on any of its members would be considered an attack on all. Photo: AFP

MEI Wishes All Hindus a Happy Deepavali



Fireworks lighting up the sky above the Al-Seef area of Dubai for Deepavali. Photo: AFP

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