YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE MIDDLE EAST | 23 - 27 November 2026

MEIWeekly.



The Saudi-led military coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis said on Thursday that the Iran-aligned rebels attacked Aramco's Jazan refinery, a day after hitting the largest oil facility in the Kingdom. The strike - which reportedly killed a Nepali national, injured several people and sparked a fire - was the Houthis' latest blow against key Saudi facilities. Photo: AFP

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

READ: MEI Research Assistant Ellina Khrais-Azibi reviews *The Global Gulf*, a book which aims to dissect the region's emerging strategic model: market-driven, multi-aligned and multi-networked. Dive into the read **here**.

READ: Despite its efforts to distance itself from the US–Israeli war against Iran, Tehran remains skeptical of European neutrality — complicating plans for a new regional security framework. To read more, click **here**.

WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Houthis on Winning Streak Against Saudi Forces

Even after the Yemeni government declared a major counter-offensive last month — aided by Saudi warplanes dropping bombs across the country — Houthi fighters are continuing to gain ground. If the rebels continue to expand their control, the result could be an Iran-backed pariah state beside the Red Sea.

Israeli Opposition Makes Progess in Ousting Netanyahu

Mr Gadi Eisenkot announced late Tuesday that he and Avigdor Liberman, the leader of the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party, agreed to sign a deal formally bringing their two parties into coalition. Mr Liberman said in a radio interview the next day that a new government could be formed by next week.



While that was a vital first step towards building a governing majority, Mr Eisenkot still needs similar backing from other parties to complete it. He set a goal of announcing a new government by 6 December, when his mandate expires. Photo: AFP

Isis Attacks Military Headquarters in Syria

Two Syrian security personnel were killed and five others injured in a suicide attack in the northeastern city of Hasakah on Wednesday, according to local authorities. Four gunmen attacked an Internal Security Forces headquarters, where Syrian forces killed two before the remaining two detonated their suicide vests.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

MEI-Bisa Seminar Series 2026: Session Four

This seminar explored the geopolitical fallout of the US–Israeli war against Iran and Tehran's retaliatory strikes on American bases across the Gulf. Speakers examined how the expanding conflict exposed Gulf vulnerabilities despite heavy investments in US defence systems, prompting American allies worldwide to reassess their security alignments. The discussion also highlighted an alarming convergence between the Russia–Ukraine and US–Israeli–Iran wars — evidenced by Ukraine's strikes on an Iranian ship and Gulf states buying Ukrainian counter-drone expertise — before concluding with how major powers are adapting to a reshaping global order. If you missed this event or want to revisit, click **here**.



Now one of the world's leading producers of interceptors, Kyiv offered Riyadh help in intercepting Iranian drones. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Lebanon Plans to Open Second International Airport

Beirut plans to open a second international airport in December to bring economic growth to the poorer north, in a project that underlines the diminished political sway of the Hezbollah group, which had long opposed it. Kleiat Airport, located on the Mediterranean coast, about 20 kilometres from the border crossing to Syria, will offer another gateway to Lebanon alongside Beirut international airport, where travel has been disrupted by wars between Israel and Hezbollah in recent years.



The opening comes as Lebanon continues to grapple with occupation by Israel in the south. Photo: AFP

Mecca Alliance Meeting Underway

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are holding a meeting on their mutual defence agreement in Islamabad, two Pakistani sources said on Thursday. The Foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Turkey are arriving in Pakistan to attend the meeting, which will be held today and Saturday, the sources told Reuters. The three countries signed a joint defence agreement in Mecca in August amid escalating concerns about the increasingly aggressive US-Israeli war against Iran.



Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia raise questions about how the three nations intend to translate their agreement into action. Photo: AFP

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