

# Iran-Saudi rivalry escalates

A cold war between Saudi Arabia and its neighbour, arch-rival Iran, is intensifying as the two powers struggle to shape a regional order devoid of so-called Islamic State (IS)



## IRAN

Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** (above) has significantly increased Tehran's influence in both Syria and Iraq, contributing to collapse of IS

## IRAQ

Iran is main sponsor of powerful Shia militias that dominate Iraq's **Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF)** – dubbed as country's second, and stronger, army

Eager to claw back influence, Riyadh has this

year engaged with Iraq's prime minister **Haider al-Abadi** and influential Shia cleric **Muqtada al-Sadr** (pictured). **Riyadh and Baghdad have said they will open Arar border crossing for first time in 27 years**



## QATAR

Riyadh spearheading economic boycott by four Arab nations of Qatar, saying gas-rich country backs terrorism and cosies up to Iran

## YEMEN

Saudi Arabia remains deadlocked in war waged since March 2015 against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, who have been fighting against Saudi-backed central government

Riyadh has blamed Iran for supplying Houthi rebels with weapons including ballistic missiles – move described as “act of war”

## SAUDI ARABIA

Recent anti-corruption purge appears to have completed consolidation of power by 32-year-old **Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman** (left), freeing him to pursue aggressive confrontation with Iran

## LEBANON

Resignation of Saudi-allied Lebanese prime minister **Saad al-Hariri** (left) has plunged nation into political crisis. Hariri blames resignation on Iran and its Lebanese proxy **Hezbollah**



Hezbollah's **Hassan Nasrallah** (right) says Hariri's decision to resign was “Saudi-imposed”

Riyadh believed to have forced Hariri to quit because his government was effectively controlled by Hezbollah

