

MEIWeekly.



Some 200 mainly masked students gathered at Tehran University on Tuesday (14 January) to protest against the downing of a Ukrainian airliner and were locked in a tense standoff with youths from the Basij militia loyal to the establishment. These students were among the hordes of Iranians who have taken to the streets in protest recently. Photo: Atta Kenare/[AFP](#).

CALENDAR: UPCOMING INSTITUTE EVENTS

Ideological Conflict in the Islamic State

Join us on **22 January** for a talk titled “Ideological Conflict in the Islamic State” by Dr Cole M Bunzel. Drawing on leaked documents and other sources, the talk will examine the long-brewing controversy in the Islamic State over matters of ideology and their legacy for the group and the jihadi movement at large.



WHAT'S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Massive Protests in Iran over Aircraft Downing

Public anger turned against the Iranian government after it was revealed that the commercial airliner with 176 passengers on board had mistakenly been shot down by the Iranian military. Huge crowds turned out on the streets of Tehran, Tabriz and other cities to protest. “They tell us the lie that it is America, but our enemy is right here,” the masses chanted as the authorities attempted to defuse the situation with teargas and heavy security presence.



A Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) fighter patrols the area in a location south of the Libyan capital Tripoli. The ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey between the internationally recognised GNA and the renegade militia led by General Khalifa Haftar came into effect last Saturday (12 January), but tensions still persist, with reports of continuing violence. Photo: Mahmud Turkia/[AFP](#).

Breakdown of Libya’s Ceasefire

Just hours after signing an internationally brokered ceasefire last Saturday (12 January), the two warring groups in Libya have accused each other of breaching the truce “in several areas with all kinds of weapons.” This comes after months of conflict between forces from the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by General Khalifa Haftar, and the Government of National Accord (GNA) since 2019, which has seen the deaths of thousands.

Singapore Sends Condolences to Oman

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President Halimah Yacob have written to Oman’s new royal ruler, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, to offer their condolences on the death of the nation’s ruler last Friday (10 January). Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said was honoured as a “remarkable and wise leader who laid the foundations for modern Oman” by Madam Halimah, while Mr Lee described him as “the architect of Oman’s development”, who “brought peace and stability through great foresight and meticulous planning”.

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP WATCH ON

Berlin Conference on Libya Set for Sunday

This Sunday (19 January), representatives from 14 groups and countries, including the warring Libyan National Army (LNA) and Government of National Accord (GNA), will come together at a United Nations-sponsored conference held in Berlin to discuss solutions to Libya’s political crisis.

First Step to Removing Netanyahu’s Immunity

The first step to removing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s immunity will likely be made next week. Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein is expected to announce a date for the Knesset plenum to convene, despite pressure from Blue and White and Likud to speed up and delay the plenum respectively.

#MUSTREAD: WHAT’S POPULAR ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: Speaking at MEI’s Annual Conference on Wednesday (15 January), Guest of Honour Singapore’s Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam shared that while global pessimism surrounding the state of the global economy is vastly overstated, the Middle East still faces other challenges like sustainability and youth unemployment. Singapore, he said, remains keen to be part of the Middle East’s growth trajectory.
<https://bit.ly/2TtBhr8>

Missed MEI’s two-day Annual Conference? Read the highlights in SCMP’s report which says that while education, demographics and good governance are seen as key driving factors for Middle East growth, challenges still persist due to ongoing conflict and controversies in the region.
<https://bit.ly/35U8mze>

TWITTER: Why did the Arab Spring not spread to Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation? HE Dr Alwi Shihab argues at MEI’s Annual Conference that it is due to the differing types of Islam in the Arab world and South-east Asia. Get a recap of our live tweets of his speech here:
<https://bit.ly/2NzOmlY>



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