



DATELINE MEI

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MEI Event: Workshop at TISS, Mumbai

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The Middle East Institute organised a two-day workshop (10th November to 12th November, 2011) at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. It was an *Introductory Workshop on International Relations: Perspectives on the Challenges of Conflict Resolution*. It was organised by the Armed Conflict Research and Documentation Project. The MEI workshop was conducted in collaboration with the Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management, TISS. The workshop was held in the JTCDM Naoroji Campus of TISS.

On the first day (10 November), a talk on the **Arab-Israeli Conflict** was held. Professor P.R. Kumaraswamy was the speaker. Dr. Samrat Sinha, faculty member of the Centre for Disaster Management, was the moderator and Chair for this session. In this talk, a historical narrative on the root causes of the conflict and its emergence in the West Asian region was given. The students were told about the dispersion of the Jewish population from their ancestral land of Palestine after the Crusades. In the aftermath, the Jews settled across the world. The core reason for their desire to return to their homeland was the fact that they always remained a minority and their problems transcended spatio-temporal dimensions. But the desire to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine was met with a severe problem - the land was inhabited by Arabs. The conflict, therefore, arose because a new population consisting of the Jewish people had to be settled in a land that was already occupied by Arabs. This is where the conflict begins. The students attending the seminar were mostly from the Centre for Disaster Management, pursuing their Master's degree in Conflict Resolution. The Workshop was designed keeping this factor in mind. The response was very positive. It was an interactive session with the students. They came up with their queries and Professor Kumaraswamy elaborated on their comments.

In the second session, held post-lunch, the MEI team held the *National Security Prisoner's Dilemma Simulation Exercise*. It was conducted by **Debak Das, Shubhra Chaturvedi, Dipanwita Chakravorty and Amna Sunbul**, all of whom are research students working with the MEI. About 40 students participated in the game. It was a game based on the Prisoner's Dilemma. According to the rules of the game, two states (Arabia and Transylvania) are in a competition to sell oil to an advanced landlocked state (Oilistan).

They could either co-operate with the other team at the time of negotiation to share the profits or they could defect and profit alone for themselves. It is a game where players are expected to apply rationale and logic to the situation and think as states do. Accordingly, there were four teams, namely, Arabia 1 versus Transylvania 1, Arabia 2 versus Transylvania 2, who were not allowed to communicate with each other. Each team consisted of about ten students. The students constantly engaged in discussions as to how they should proceed with the game. There were 11 rounds, at the end of which the final scores were declared. Arabia 2 emerged as the winner and its members were awarded MEI mementos.

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