

National Seminar
India's Development Partnership: Expanding Vistas
15-16 June 2022

Brief Bio of Chairs and Speakers along with their Abstracts

Amb Vijay Thakur Singh, Director General, ICWA



Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh holds a Master's degree in Economics from Himachal Pradesh University. She joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1985. Her first posting was in Embassy of India in Madrid, Spain, where she later went as Deputy Chief of Mission in 2006. She worked in the Ministry of External Affairs from 1989 to 1999, handling India's relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan. She was posted as Counsellor in the Embassy of India in Kabul from 2003 to 2005. She has had multilateral experience, particularly in economic and environmental issues. She was Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York from 2000 to 2003. She has served as Joint Secretary to the President of India from August 2007 to August 2012 and as Joint Secretary at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) from 2012 to 2013. She has been High Commissioner of India to Singapore from 2013 to 2016 and Ambassador of India to Ireland from 2016 to 2018. For two years from 2018, she was Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and retired in September 2020. She took over as the DG of ICWA in July 2021.

**Shri Dammu Ravi,
Secretary (ER), MEA**



Mr. Dammu Ravi joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1989. He served in Indian Missions abroad in Mexico, Cuba, Brussels in various capacities from 1991 to 2001. He served at Headquarters in Ministry of External Affairs as Deputy Secretary/Director in West Europe and UN Divisions from 2001 to 2006. He served as Private Secretary to Minister of Tourism and Culture from March 2006 to May 2009. He was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs responsible for India's relations with Latin America and Caribbean countries from October 2009 to December 2013.

2. He served in Ministry of Commerce as Joint Secretary from January 2014 to February 2020 where he handled India's Trade Policy, including WTO issues such as trade disputes, NAMA, fisheries negotiations, trade policy review etc. He was part of Indian delegation to WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi (MC X) in November 2015 and (MC XI) in Buenos Aires in December 2017. He also handled India's trade and investment relations with regional groups such as G20, BRICS, Commonwealth, SCO, APEC, IORA, ASEM, UNCTAD etc. He was India's chief negotiator in the mega regional free trade agreement 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)'.

3. On return to Ministry of External Affairs in March 2020, he was appointed as Additional Secretary (COVID & Europe).

4. Currently, he is Secretary (Economic Relations) in Ministry of External Affairs.

5. He holds a Masters Degree in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. He has published research papers on trade matters:

- (i) Standardizing India's Exports,
- (ii) Liberalizing India's Agriculture Markets
- (iii) Evolution of India's Trade Negotiations

6. Mr. Dammu Ravi is married and has a daughter.

Shri Prabhat Kumar, AS [ER and DPA], MEA



Mr. Prabhat Kumar is currently serving as Additional Secretary in charge of Economic Relations and Development Partnership Administration of Ministry of External Affairs. Before this appointment he was Additional Secretary, Passport Seva Project and Chief Passport Officer (April 2021 - November 2021).

He served as India's Ambassador to Kazakhstan from November 2017 to March 2021 and as India's Ambassador to Colombia and Ecuador from May 2014 to October 2017.

He was in charge of Energy Security Division of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) from October 2010 to April 2014. This Division served as the nodal point in the MEA for energy security related matters. In May 2012, he also given the additional responsibility of heading the Investment & Technology Promotion (ITP) Division. The two divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs have now been combined and rechristened as the Economic Diplomacy Division.

From 2007 to 2010, he was posted in the Permanent Mission of India to the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva as Counsellor/Minister. The Conference on Disarmament is an Intergovernmental organization functioning under the auspices of the UN, that negotiates international disarmament and arms control treaties.

Before going to Geneva, he was Counsellor/First Secretary in charge of the Political Wing in Embassy of India, Kathmandu from July 2003 to February 2007.

At headquarters in Delhi from September 1999 to June 2003, he worked in the Finance and Protocol Divisions of Ministry of External Affairs.

From 1996-99, he served as First Secretary/Charge d' Affaires in the Embassy of India in Zagreb, Croatia.

In his first posting abroad in Madrid in 1993, he underwent compulsory language training in Spanish in the first year and was absorbed in the mission as Head of Chancery and in charge of political and commercial work.

He joined the India Foreign Service in September 1991 and underwent training at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Administration Academy, Mussoorie and Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi during 1991-92.

He did his Graduation (BA - History Honors) from Hansraj College, Delhi University (1984-87) and Post Graduation in History (1987-89) from Delhi University. He hails from Patna, Bihar and is fluent in Spanish apart from Bhojpuri, Hindi and English. He is married to Tilottama Kumar.

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS



Professor Sachin Chaturvedi is currently Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based Think-Tank. He works on issues related to development economics, involving development finance, SDGs and South-South Cooperation, apart from trade, investment and innovation linkages with special focus on WTO. Currently, he is also Vice Chairman, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis; and ex-officio Vice Chairman of Madhya Pradesh State Policy and Planning Commission. He is also Member, Board of Governors, Reserve Bank of India.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi has been part of several important initiatives of the Government of India and takes keen interest in transforming economic policymaking towards integrated and evidence based approaches. He is one of the foremost commentators on India's external sector economic engagements and partnerships. He is considered as most dynamic and affable by his peers and has mentored several bright scholars and researchers in the profession.

He has authored/edited more than 22 books, apart from contributing several chapters in the edited volumes and also publishing several research articles in prestigious journals. He is on the Editorial Board of several journals including the South Asian Economic Journal, IDS Bulletin, Sussex, UK among others. His

book “The Logic of Sharing – Indian Approach to South-South Cooperation” has been acclaimed internationally as one of the best volumes on international development cooperation.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi was also the ‘Global Justice Fellow’ at the MacMillan Center for International Affairs at Yale University (2009-2010) and has served as a Visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and was a Developing Country Fellow at the University of Amsterdam (1996), Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (2003), and Visiting Scholar at the German Development Institute (2007).

Professor Chaturvedi has taken keen interest in building of institutions and in launching of networks. He is credited with the launch of Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) and Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC). He has also created “Delhi Process”, a major forum for exchange of ideas on South-South Cooperation.

Amb. Amar Sinha, Former Ambassador of India to Afghanistan



Mr. Amar Sinha retired from the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) as Secretary Economic Relations in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, in June 2017 after a diplomatic career spanning 35 years.

He has served in different capacities in Indian Mission around the world including in Algiers (1983-87), Buenos Aires (1987-90), Washington DC (1998-2001) Jakarta (2001-04), and Brussels (2004-07).

At Headquarters he has served as PS to Minister of State in the Ministries of External Affairs, Chemicals and Fertilizers and Department of Electronics (1991-96), as Director (BSM) in Ministry of External Affairs from June 1996 to July 1997 and again as OSD to Minister of State for External Affairs from July 1997 to April 1998.

In 2007 he was appointed India's Ambassador to Tajikistan (2007-2010) and on his return to New Delhi served as Joint Secretary Trade Policy in the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry (2010-13) where he handled the WTO and other trade negotiations. He also oversaw India's participation in various multilateral fora such as UNCTAD, APTA, BIMSTEC, G20, IBSA, BRICS, etc.

In 2013 he was appointed India's Ambassador to Afghanistan (2013-2016) After completion of his assignment in Kabul successfully he assumed the charge of the post of Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, on January 15, 2016. His portfolio included relations with all countries in Africa, Gulf and West Asia Region, Development Partnership, Trade and Investment Promotion and all multilateral economic work such as BRICS etc. He also served an ex-officio Director on the Board of EXIM Bank of India.

On his retirement from diplomatic service on 30 June 2017 he has been appointed as a Director on the Board of Hindustan Petroleum Corporations Ltd. He joined the RIS as a Distinguished Fellow in November 2017, and has lent support to several think tanks focused on Afghanistan and other strategic issues. He also advises Chambers of Commerce on trade and investment issues.

He is currently a Member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB).

He is an Economics Graduate from Patna University. He speaks Hindi, English, French and Spanish fluently and is familiar with Dari (Persian). His interests include reading, travel and sports.

Dr. Nihar Nayak, Research Fellow, MPIDSA



Dr. Nihar R. Nayak is Research Fellow with IDSA, New Delhi. His area of expertise is Climate Change, Energy, and Political violence in South Asia. Dr. Nayak has completed PhD in International Politics from JNU. He was Visiting Fellow to PRIO, Oslo, in 2006 and 2007. He did a special course on Peace Research in International Summer School from Oslo University in 2007. He has been Visiting Faculty to the Center for the Study of Nepal, Faculty of Social Science, Banaras Hindu University in 2011. He has been Guest Faculty to LBSNAA, Mussoorie since September 2006. Dr. Nayak has both national and international

publications including the book “Strategic Himalayas: Republican Nepal and External Powers”.

Abstract

Neighborhood First: Enhanced Focus on Nepal

The neighbourhood holds a central position in India’s foreign policy. The importance of building partnerships have been driven by 3Cs: connectivity, commerce, and contacts. Given the geographical contiguity, civilizational linkages, and open border, India believes that if Nepal is not politically stable, economically prosperous, and strategically safe, then extra-regional powers might have influence. Therefore, India supported multiparty democracy and extended all possible economic and technical assistance to Nepal in infrastructure development and economic growth. This was strengthened further under the ‘neighbourhood first’ programs in 2014.

India has been the foremost development partner of Nepal since 1951. The projects under the Development Partnership have been diverse in size and sector with a geographical spread throughout Nepal. They include projects financed through grants as well as Lines of Credit provided by India. These projects aim not only to improve infrastructure and cross-border connectivity but also serve to make the ties even more people-centric.

However, the partnership is not free from controversy. There are certain sections in Nepal that have often suspected India’s contributions. Recently, many Indian projects face political, environmental, and economic challenges. The provisions under the 2015-constitution have complicated that further.

Dr. Biswajit Nag, Professor & Head (Economics Division), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade



Specialization : Economics

Designation : Professor & Head (Economics Division), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

Email : biswajit@iift.edu

Qualification

Ph.D. (Economics) and PG Diploma in Financial Management

Areas of Interest / Specialization

Industrial Economics, Applied Econometrics, International Trade & Finance.

Work Experience

Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan (Dec 2018 - March 2019)

Served the Poverty and Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in Bangkok, (Thailand) during 2003-04.

Worked as Research Fellow at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi in 1998.

Worked in the Tenth Finance Commission (of India) in 1994 as Economic Investigator.

Prof. Medha Bisht, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, South Asia University



Dr Bisht is a Ph.D from Diplomatic Studies Division, Jawaharlal Nehru University, where she wrote her thesis on Multi-stakeholder negotiations on security and development. Her country expertise in South Asia is restricted to Bhutan and Pakistan. She also works at the intersection of strategy and philosophy and is particularly interested in non-western sources of diplomatic practices in Asia. Her book, 'Kautilya's Arthashastra: Philosophy of Strategy' is currently in the publication stage with Routledge. Interested in the concept of water diplomacy, her research engagement has highlighted the micro and macro narratives related to water governance and water diplomacy in South Asia. She

has conducted stakeholder engagements and dialogues in South Asia to identify the political, cultural and ecological perspectives pertaining to rivers and riparian communities. She was a consultant to IUCN-India in 2017, where she co-authored a course on 'Hydro-diplomacy in South Asia' in collaboration with Dhaka University. The course was pilot-tested in India and Bangladesh in 2017 with mid-level water professionals. She was also a lead investigator in India, for a project undertaken in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, based in Lahore from 2016 to 2017.

Abstract

India's Development Partnerships: A Case of India-Bhutan Energy Transition

Development Diplomacy is an anchor to facilitate relations between countries. Infact it can also be termed as a 'relational practice', where the political end objective is to develop, manage and cultivate relations- not only between state but also with societal and economic actors. The latter particularly hold importance given the high impact they have in shaping narratives around development projects. The presentation shall raise certain generic and a few specific questions on India's development partnership in the South Asian neighbourhood. The India- Bhutan case is employed to offer specific insights for unravelling promises, patterns and perspectives, which will be a useful exercise towards understanding the nature of development diplomacy in general. By focussing on questions related to renewable energy transitions- tensions between promises, patterns and perspectives are unveiled. From a strategic perspective, an attempt is undertaken to examine the sustainability (economic, ecological and social) of these development projects vis a vis India's Neighbourhood First Policy- which has been concentrating in building physical connectivity through multi-modal transit transport projects. While the specific focus is on Bhutan, insights stemming from it does have ramifications to raise certain fundamental and critical questions vis a vis India's Neighbourhood First Policy- which is being considered as an axis for rewriting India's role and place in the Indo-Pacific region in particular- marking the advent of India as an aspiring great power.

Amb. Ranjit Ray, Former Ambassador of India to Nepal



Ranjit Rae retired from the Indian Foreign Service as Ambassador to Nepal. Penguin Random House has recently published his book Kathmandu Dilemma, Resetting India-Nepal Ties.

Srimanti Sarkar, Assistant Professor, West Bengal State University, Kolkata



Srimanti Sarkar is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, West Bengal State University. Her areas of research interests include theoretical postulates of democracy and democratization in South Asia with special focus on India and Bangladesh. Her latest publication includes a chapter titled 'The Genocide of 1971 in Bangladesh: Lessons from History' in Conceptualizing Mass Violence: Representations, Recollections, and Reinterpretations (Navras J. Aafreedi and Priya Singh, eds), Routledge: New York, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-367-69997-0 (hbk). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003146131>. She can be reached through email: s.srimanti@gmail.com

Abstract

India-Bangladesh Development Partnership in the 21st Century: A Critical Overview

The relationship between India and Bangladesh is civilisational. Historically, the two countries have shared the tragic experiences of Partition. Culturally, they share common language, religion, traditional norms, and heritage. Economically, they were, and still are, well connected through bilateral trade links. And politically, the current dispensation, in both the countries, is pragmatic and keen on enhancing bilateral ties. It had led Development Partnership/Cooperation to flourish naturally between India and Bangladesh. However, in view of the incoherent, fragmented and ever-changing landscape of global cooperation, the paper will try to appraise the following: (a) India-Bangladesh Development Partnership/Cooperation over the last 5 years; (b) the persisting and new sites of contestation in the way of India-Bangladesh Development Partnership/Cooperation; and (c) a plausible way ahead. The manner in which India-Bangladesh Development Partnership/Cooperation in the 21st century help improve the South-South Cooperation (SSC) will be a matter of close look-out of this paper.

Angshuman Choudhury, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi



Angshuman Choudhury is a Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is also a member of the Indo-Pacific Circle. Prior to this, he was a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, where he coordinated the South East Asia Research Programme. He is a former GIBSA Visiting Fellow to the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin. He primarily works on Myanmar, Northeast India, Southeast Asia, Indian foreign policy, and patterns of armed conflict. He has additional interests in identity, citizenship regimes, and forced displacement, with focus on Assam and Rakhine State.

His writings on these issues have appeared in a number of Indian and international publications, including South China Morning Post, Asia Times, The

Diplomat, The Indian Express, The Hindu, The Irrawaddy, Channel News Asia, Scroll, and The Wire. He has also appeared on various TV news panels in both Indian and international media networks, including BBC Burmese, TRT World, Channel News Asia, and Mirror Now, and delivered lectures on these issues at various institutes, including the University of Bonn and OP Jindal Global University. He has contributed a chapter to The Global Compact on Refugees: Indian Perspectives and Experiences (2020), a volume published by the Academicians' Working Group of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) India on the Global Compact on Refugees' applicability in the Indian context.

He also sits on the Board of Trustees of the Development and Justice Initiative (DAJI), a New Delhi-based NGO that works with asylum seekers and other marginalised groups. He is the co-founder of Right to Nationality and Citizenship Network (RNCN), a collective of researchers, lawyers, and activists researching on and advocating against statelessness in India. In 2021, he co-founded the Myanmar India Collective (The Myicol), a group of Myanmar observers and researchers aiming to disseminate knowledge and scholarship on Myanmar, India and their bilateral relations.

Abstract

The Resurgent Eastward Push: India's Development Cooperation with Myanmar

For India, Myanmar is a crucial neighbourhood partner. It is the only country that sits at the intersection of both the Neighbourhood First and Act East Policies. This lends a unique value to Myanmar within India's foreign policy calculus.

As a country that shares a 1600 km long land border with India, Myanmar's development and political stability are squarely in India's interests. This is even more so given the rapidly expanding footprint of China in Myanmar, including within the former's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is this intricate set of concerns that has driven India to invest heavily in Myanmar's development.

Within this context, this paper will assess the primary areas of India-Myanmar development cooperation and the dominant patterns of aid disbursement. It will look at these across two specific periods: the democratic transition in Myanmar (2011-2021) and the post-coup period (February 2021-present). By doing so, it will analyse the prospects for India-Myanmar development cooperation in the near future and the various challenges therein.

Dr. N. Manoharan, Associate Professor, Christ University, Bangalore



Dr N. Manoharan is Director, Centre for East Asian Studies and an Associate Professor of International Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru. He earlier served at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), PMO, New Delhi. He was South Asia Fellow at the East-West Center Washington and is a recipient of Mahbub-ul Haq international award for research.

His areas of interest include internal security, terrorism, Sri Lanka, Maldives, human rights, ethnic conflicts, multiculturalism, security sector reforms and conflict resolution.

His main books include:

- Developing Democracies, Counter-terror Laws and Security: Lessons from India and Sri Lanka;
- ‘Security Deficit’: A Comprehensive Internal Security Strategy for India;
- India’s War on Terror;
- SAARC: Towards Greater Connectivity;
- Ethnic Violence and Human Rights in Sri Lanka; and
- Counterterrorism Legislation in Sri Lanka: Evaluating Efficacy.

His forthcoming book is on Federal Aspects of Foreign Policy: The Role of Tamil Nadu Fishermen Issue in India-Sri Lanka Relations.

He writes regularly for leading newspapers, websites and reputed peer-reviewed international journals.

Abstract

India-Maldives Development Partnership: Promises and Possibilities

India's approach towards Development Partnership with the external world has been inclusive, humanistic, unconditional, comprehensive and futuristic. India-Maldives Development Partnership has to be seen in the context of India-Maldives relations that have been described as "close, cordial and multi-dimensional". The Maldives undoubtedly occupies a very special place in India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. India's development partnership with the Maldives goes with the 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision of the Government of India. The partnership is characterised by transparency and as per the needs and priorities of the Maldivians. It touches every facet of the development of the Maldives to enhance stability and prosperity of the atoll state. Involving about USD three billion in terms of grants, loans, budgetary support, capacity building and training assistance, the development partnership support is intended to reach the beneficiaries directly via the local councils. However, there are implementation issues due to lack of political consensus and extra-regional factors. Yet, the future looks promising.

Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'souza, Founder & President, Mantraya; Visiting Fellow, SWP, Berlin



Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza is Visiting Research Fellow at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin; Founder & President, Mantraya; Board Director at Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo; Visiting Faculty and Member of Research & Advisory Committee at the Naval War College, Goa; Non-resident scholar, Middle East Institute, Washington D.C.; Research Fellow at Welt Trends-Institut für international Politik, Potsdam, Germany; International Advisor, Nordic Counter Terrorism Network, Helsinki, Finland; Member, Board of Studies, School of International & Area Studies, Goa University; Editorial board member of *Small Wars & Insurgencies* (Routledge: UK); Adviser for Independent Conflict Research and Analysis, London. She has conducted field research in

Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Africa, Australia, Canada, United States, Jammu and Kashmir and India's North East.

As Team leader for Local Planning and Budgeting–IDLG-UNDP-LOGO project, Kabul, Afghanistan (2020); Adviser, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2015-16); International Election Observer for the audit and recount of Afghanistan's Presidential Runoff elections,(2014); Senior Transition Consultant, United Nations Mine Action Service (2013), Kabul and External Reviewer for the country programme of Action Aid International, Afghanistan (2011), she has worked with governmental and non-governmental sectors for more than a decade and conducted field based studies in various provinces of Afghanistan.

Dr D'Souza has been a Founding Professor, Kautilya School of Public Policy, Hyderabad (2021-2022); Visiting Research Associate at the School of Business & Governance, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia (2017); Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore (2010-14); Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, New Delhi (2006-10); Fulbright Fellow and Visiting Research associate at South Asia Studies, The Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC(2005-06).

Dr D'Souza's research interests and expertise include: Politics of aid, development, gender and security in Afghanistan; Prospects for long term stabilization of Afghanistan; Women, peace and conflict resolution; State and Peace building in fragile states; Security Sector Reform; International interventions, Aid delivery and Post conflict stabilization; Strategic Communications; Countering terrorism, insurgencies and violent extremism; Non-traditional security threats and crisis response in Asia; India's foreign, maritime and security policy; Prospects for Regional Cooperation in South and South East Asia.

Among her most recent published work are edited books titled Countering Insurgencies and Violent Extremism in South and South East Asia (Cass Military Studies, Routledge: UK), Afghanistan in Transition: Beyond 2014?, co-edited books, Perspectives on South Asian Security and Saving Afghanistan. She has guest edited a special issue on "Countering insurgencies and violent extremism in South Asia" in Small Wars & Insurgencies (UK: Routledge), February 2017. She has contributed chapters to edited books, journal articles, encyclopedias, yearbooks and regional surveys and op-eds in the media.

She has published in international peer reviewed journals including Small Wars & Insurgencies (UK: Routledge), Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs (Sage), The Journal of South Asian Development (Sage), South Asian Survey(Sage), Contemporary South Asia (London: Routledge), Strategic Analysis (Routledge), Journal of Defence Studies, Combating Terrorism Exchange (Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, USA), Small Wars Journal, (Small Wars

Foundation, Bethesda, USA), Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, (Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University: Washington DC), The Journal of International Security Affairs, No. 20, (Washington DC), Welt Trends: Journal for International Politics and Comparative Studies(Germany: University of Potsdam), and others. Her work on Afghanistan and India have been published in The Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Europa World, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge) and Encyclopedia Britannica. Dr D'Souza has been interviewed by various media outlets and her writings on Afghanistan and South Asia have appeared in The Wall Street Journal, The Strait Times (Singapore), The Hindu (India), Indian Express, Business Standard (India),The Business Times (Singapore), among others.

Abstract

Soft Power diplomacy in Afghanistan: Limitations and Future Prospects

The Taliban takeover of power in Afghanistan on 15 August 2021 has provided a serious setback to India's two decades-long engagement strategy in Afghanistan. The soft-power policy of providing developmental assistance of nearly US\$3 billion, had generated immense goodwill for New Delhi and was the centerpiece of India's engagement in that war-torn country. Most of those gains, similar to the achievements made in the last two-decades by the international community, stand reversed. While soft-power diplomacy works well in a stable political environment, its limitations are quite evident in conflict-ridden political systems. In the new, yet chaotic and unstable Afghanistan, India's capacity and space to adhere to its past soft-power policy has clearly shrunk. This, however, opens a window of opportunity for stock-taking and policy-review exercise. An engagement policy needs to be carefully crafted to meet New Delhi's objectives in that country and leverage developmental assistance as a tool to regain the lost ground in Afghanistan.

Amb. Gautam Mukhopadhyay, Former Ambassador of India to Myanmar



Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya retired from Government in May 2016 after 36 years in the Indian Foreign Service having served as Ambassador

of India in Syria (December 2005-January 2009), Afghanistan (July 2010-May 2013) and Myanmar (June 2013-May 2016). He is an alumnus of the National Defence College of India (2001), and has also worked in the UN Headquarters in New York as a Consultant on Social Development (September 1999-August 2000) and as a Visiting Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC, (October 2009-March 2010). He re-opened the Indian Embassy in Kabul in November 2001 as Charge d’Affaires after the ouster of the Taliban in Afghanistan and returned there as India’s Ambassador to Afghanistan from July 2010 to May 2013. He retired as India’s Ambassador to Myanmar in May 2016. He is currently Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, an independent policy think tank based in Delhi, focused on the North East India, South East Asia, Afghanistan and China.

Mr. Sanjay Pulipaka, Independent Researcher on International Politics and Security Issues



Sanjay Pulipaka is an independent researcher on international politics and security issues. He was previously a Senior Fellow for Research Programmes and Strategic Neighbourhood at the Delhi Policy Group; Senior Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum Library; and Senior Consultant at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). Sanjay Pulipaka was a Wrangler Pavate Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge, UK, and a former Fulbright Fellow in the Conflict Transformation Programme, in the United States. Sanjay’s areas of interest include India’s foreign policy, Democracy, Indian Politics, India’s immediate neighbourhood, political transition, connectivity frameworks, India-China relations, India-US Relations, regionalism, and other related domains. Further, he has been closely following the political transition in Myanmar and conducted field research in that country and in Northeast India. Sanjay also has extensive work experience with think-tanks and civil society organisations in India. He has considerable work experience in strengthening participatory political processes, governance frameworks and platforms for wider consultation. He has a substantive publication record with three co-edited volumes, policy reports, numerous research papers and Op-Ed essays.

Abstract

From Assistance to Partnerships: India and the Indo-Pacific

Development Assistance has a long history in international politics. During the Cold War, the development assistance was an attempt at limiting the influence of ideological frameworks of the adversary. In the post-Cold War era, the need to ensure effective management of global commons and national interests has informed development assistance initiatives. These include enhanced access to markets, the need to strengthen soft power by strengthening cultural/educational relations and nurturing technological partnerships. Of course, other interests, such as the need to access natural resources, continue to guide development assistance initiatives.

Quite often, the idea of development assistance generates an image of the 'developed West' aiding 'underdeveloped countries.' However, there are countries such as India, despite development challenges, which have a long history of development assistance. Since the early years of its independence, India has provided development assistance to various countries.

In the recent past, global politics has witnessed significant geopolitical shifts. There is now a power shift from the West to the East, and many emerging economies are significant players in the global economic landscape. As a result, many old constructs, such as the Indo-Pacific, are now getting articulated with renewed enthusiasm. In this context, India's development partnerships are getting scaled up and there is expansion in their geographic reach.

It should be noted that India often uses the word 'partnership' rather than 'assistance' in its external engagement. Such an emphasis suggests that India is keen to avoid 'donor-receiver' relationships. Instead, the partnership implies sharing of developmental experience and not an imposition of rigid economic models. Further, in its development engagement, India is keen to engage with various stakeholders at multiple levels and is not interested in merely confining itself to a limited set of political players at the apex of the political system. Also, partnership suggests continuous healthy engagement even after the suspension of aid or financial assistance. More specifically, while contemporary geopolitics defines the action of sovereign states, the idea of partnership implies a long-term commitment beyond immediate power politics.

The proposed presentation will attempt to explain the above variables in India's development partnership in the Indo Pacific region.

**Prof. Shankari Sundaraman, Professor, Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies,
School of International Studies, JNU**



Professor Shankari Sundaraman is Professor of Southeast Asian Studies and former Chair at the Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2003 as an Associate Professor. Prior to this she worked as a Research Officer and Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) from 1996 to 2003. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy (APCD) at the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra from May to July 2005, where she worked on the trilateral relations between India, Indonesia and Australia. She was also a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta in 2006-2007 as an Asia Fellow, under the prestigious ASIA Fellows award which was coordinated by the Asian Scholarship Foundation, Bangkok, the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for the Advanced Study of India (UPIASI) and funded by the Ford Foundation. During the course of this fellowship her research was on the Effects of Globalization on Separatist Conflicts in Indonesia. She has published extensively on Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Abstract

India's Development Assistance to Southeast Asia: Opportunities, Challenges and Options

The importance of development assistance as a tool of foreign policy and interstate relations cannot be overlooked. Development assistance is basically defined as a form of support where countries aid other states to meet certain targeted goals. The context of this form of assistance has been evident since the end of the II world war, particularly in the reconstruction of Japan with the assistance from the United States. Often known by the term ODA or Official Development Aid, the mechanism allows for more developed countries to assist lesser developed states to achieve economic goals that are crucial and unique to their needs. This paper looks at the broad contours of India's development assistance to the Southeast Asian region and the wider Indo-Pacific. Increasingly as the regional states are seeking to build their capacities across a wide spectrum

of areas, the receipt of development assistance becomes critical. This paper seeks to look at three core areas where India's development assistance to the region has to be focused on - opportunities, challenges and the options.

Dr. Vivek Mishra, Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi



Vivek Mishra is a Fellow with ORF's Strategic Studies Programme. His research interests include America in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific regions, particularly the role of the US in security in South Asia, Indo-US defence relations, and the Indian defence sector.

He has published two co-authored books and one co-edited volume, 15 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 14 book chapter. Dr. Mishra's articles have appeared in The Indian Express, Deccan Herald, The Pioneer, The Diplomat, The National Interest and Huffington Post. He is currently working on a book exploring the India's foreign policy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Abstract

IPEF: At the Crossroads of Geopolitics Realities and Geo-economics

On May 24, a day prior to the second in-person summit of the Quad Leaders in Tokyo, the Prime Minister of India, Prime Minister of Japan and Australia and the US President along with a dozen of initial partners from Brunei, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, collectively launched a new economic initiative called the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" (IPEF). With this new agreement all the four countries of the Quad have further reinforced their partnership in the Indo-Pacific region.

The IPEF has been touted as a forward-looking economic pact that would not negotiate on tariffs or market access while primarily seeking integration with the participating countries on issues of trade; supply chains; clean energy; decarbonization and infrastructure; and tax and anti-corruption. The agreement is likely to seek a collective approach to boosting regional trade cooperation, improving transparency and managing crises such as

the COVID-19 pandemic and any other future crisis through the development of initiatives like Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The other aspect of IPEF - based on the lines of Paris Agreement - aims to provide the development of sustainable and durable infrastructure through cross-cutting innovations in technology. This may help squaring some of India's regional objectives in the Indo-Pacific with domestic goals in achieving clean energy targets. Finally, the IPEF deals with capacity building by sharing expertise, largely in the sustenance of the open, transparent and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

For India, the IPEF could well be opportunities in strengthening its Act East orientation and consolidating its Indo-Pacific strategy.

Dr. Pragma Pandey, Research Fellow, ICWA



Dr. Pragma Pandey is a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Sapru House, New Delhi. At the ICWA her areas of research include Indo-Pacific, Indian Ocean, maritime security, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands. Prior to joining the ICWA, she was Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science in Miranda House, University of Delhi. She has completed her PhD and MPhil degrees from the Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Previously, she had obtained her Masters majoring in Political Science from the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has presented papers at various academic national and international conferences. She has considerable publications to her credit.

Abstract

India's Development Partnership: Pacific Island Countries

India is a committed development partner for Island countries in the Pacific region. In recent years, there has been a gradual positive shift in India's approach towards the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). This change can be attributed to various geopolitical, economic and strategic factors. New Delhi has

reached out to these small island states, highlighting the government's willingness for greater engagement. The most important development in facilitating India's interaction with the PICs in recent years has been the formation of *Forum for India and Pacific Islands Cooperation* (FIPIC) in 2014. The Forum which was formed in 2014, marked India's renewed strategic interest in the region. Discussions to date, in the FIPIC, have mainly revolved around issues of regional and global significance like environment, climate change, United Nations reform, fisheries management, energy security, maritime security, sustainable development etc. Over the years India has announced enhanced grant-in-aids to the island nations and concessional Line of Credits which can be availed by the small island countries for undertaking solar, renewable energy and climate related projects. India had extended support to PIC's in the SME sectors, technical experts in the fields of agriculture, healthcare and IT. Overall, India's development partnership approach focuses on a comprehensive and need based approach with respect for priorities of the partner countries. The paper will attempt to analyse these initiatives in detail.

Amb. Gurjit Singh, Former Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, Djibouti



Ambassador Gurjit Singh is a former Indian diplomat with 37 years of experience. He has been the Ambassador of India to Germany, Indonesia and ASEAN and Ethiopia and the African Union besides having been in Japan, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and Italy on assignment. He was the Sherpa for the first 2 India-Africa Summits and his book *The Injera and the Parantha on India and Ethiopia* was well received. He has also written books on India's relations with Japan, Indonesia, and Germany. He is an Honorary Professor of Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indore. He Chairs the CII Business Task Force on Trilateral Cooperation in Africa. He comments on current events on TV and in journals. He is associated with the social impact investment movement and is working on expanding it in Africa along with other trilateral initiatives for B2B engagement.

Mr. Pramit Pal Choudhury, Senior Editor, Hindustan Times



Pramit Pal Chaudhuri writes on political, security, and economic issues. He previously wrote for the Statesman and the Telegraph in Calcutta. He served on the National Security Advisory Board of the Indian government from 2011-2015. Among other affiliations, he is a member of the Asia Society Global Council, the Aspen Institute Italia, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, and the Mont Pelerin Society. Pramit is also a senior associate of Rhodium Group, New York City, advisor to the Bower Group Asia in India, a member of the Council on Emerging Markets, Washington, DC, and a delegate for the Confederation of Indian Industry-Aspen Strategy Group Indo-U.S. Strategic Dialogue and the Ananta Aspen Strategic Dialogues with Japan, China and Israel. Born in 1964, he has visited over fifty countries on five continents. Mr. Pal Chaudhuri is a history graduate from Cornell University.

Dr. Sankalp Gurjar, Research Fellow, ICWA



Sankalp Gurjar is a Research Fellow with the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi. India's foreign policy, Indian Ocean and Africa are his areas of interest. He carried out his doctoral research at the Department of International Relations, South Asian University (A University established by SAARC nations), New Delhi.

His writing has appeared in newspapers as well as in academic journals, including in *India Quarterly*, *Strategic Analysis*, *Seminar*, *Deccan Herald*, *The Economic Times*, *International Affairs*, *African Affairs*, *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, *Policy Forum* and *The Diplomat*.

Abstract

Development Partnership: India Africa Relations

The developmental partnership has been a cornerstone of the India-Africa relationship. India is providing assistance to African states, as per their needs, to build educational, technological, and human resource capabilities. Education and health are two key pillars of India's development assistance to Africa. Many African students have benefited over the years, from scholarships, such as the ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation programme) and the SCAAP (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme) provided by India. This presentation will discuss the evolution of India's development partnership with Africa.

Dr. Ruchita Beri, Senior Research Associate, MPIDSA



Ruchita Beri is a Senior Research Associate and Centre Coordinator, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean and United Nations Centre at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. She researches on international relations, political economy and security of Sub-Saharan Africa, India – Africa relations and Emerging Powers in Africa and the Indian Ocean region. She is currently the President of the African Studies Association of India, a member of the Africa Committee of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and serves on the Executive Board of the Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC). She was also a member of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI) Task Force on Blue Economy.

Ms. Beri has participated in many international conferences and regularly lectures at several institutions in India, such as the National Defence College, Foreign Service Institute, Army War College and the Defence Services Staff College. She is the Editor of *Africa Trends* a quarterly magazine published by MP- IDSA and is a member of the Editorial Committee of the journal *Africa*

Review published by Brill, the Editorial Board of *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* published by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul or UFRGS), Brazil and is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Development Cooperation Review*. She has edited and co-edited several books including *India and Africa: Common Security Challenges for the Next Decade* (Pentagon Press, 2016), *Food Governance in India: Rights, Security and Challenges in the global sphere*, (Routledge.2022), *India and Africa: Enhancing Mutual Engagement* (Pentagon Press, 2013), *Africa and Energy Security* (Academic Foundation, 2009), and a monograph *United Nations Security Council Reform: Perspectives and Prospects (IDSA, 2014)*. She has published over 100 articles and book chapters and is a regular contributor to broadcast media. She has an M.Phil in African Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and an advanced diploma on Conflict Studies from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Abstract

India- Africa Development Partnership

This paper seeks to examine the evolving features of India's development partnership with Africa. First, India has often reiterated that its engagement with Africa is unique and based on mutual benefit, contributing to Africa's development priorities through a consultative process. Second, India's Lines of Credit have helped in enhancing African capacities in diverse sectors, such as, health, agriculture and solar energy. Third, training and capacity building have been the hallmark of India's development partnership with Africa. Finally, the development partnership has led to India and Africa taking common positions on global issues, specifically on vaccine inequity during the current COVID 19 pandemic. The success of India's development partnership with African countries will rest on timely implementation of projects and a clear understanding of the African aspirations.

Amb. R. Vishwanathan, Former Ambassador of India to Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay



Ambassador (retired) Rengaraj Viswanathan was Indian ambassador to Argentina (including Uruguay and Paraguay) in 2007-12. Before that he was

ambassador to Venezuela in 2000-2003 and Consul General in Sao Paulo, Brazil 1996-2000.

He was head of the Latin America Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India 2004-7.

His other diplomatic postings include Portugal, Pakistan, Libya, Mauritius and Indian Mission to UN, New York

He is a leading Indian expert on Latin America. He writes articles and blogs and gives lectures in industry and business chambers, think tanks, universities and management schools. He has published books on Latin America.

More about him in his website

<https://ambassadorviswanathan.com/>

Prof. Aparajita Gangopadhyaya, Professor, School of International and Area Studies, Goa University



Professor Aparajita Gangopadhyay is currently the Dean, School of International and Area Studies at Goa University Goa, India. She has been a Visiting Faculty at Chengchi National University, Taiwan, Department of International Relations, Marie Curie Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland, Institute of International Relations at Vilnius University, Lithuania and the Sciences Po Lyon, France. She is also a member of the Academic Council of the Indian Studies Programme, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is also the Founding Member of Centre for International Development and Cooperation Research at the University of Bucharest, Romania and Advisory Council Member on Centre on Studies and Services on Contemporary India and Southern Asia (CESI-CAM), Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogota. She was designated as Visiting Professor Extraordinary by the Universidad Nacional de Rio Cuarto, Argentina. She has been an invited speaker to universities and institutions such as the Argentine Institute of International Relations (CARI), University of Salvador, Lomos De Zamora University, La Plata University, Universidade Siglo 21,

National University, Rosario and the National University of Rio Cuarto, Argentina. She has been a member of the Indian Delegation to Brazil as part of Government of India's India-Brazil 1.5 Dialogue in 2013.

She has widely published in areas such as India-Latin America Relations, India's Foreign Policy, India's Diaspora Policy, Argentina-Brazil Relations, and Regional Integration. She had recently jointly edited a book on India-Latin America Relations: Commercial Relations and Investment. She is currently working on an edited collections of bilingual essays (English-Spanish) on India-Latin America Relations.

Abstract

India-Latin America and the Caribbean Relations: From Cultivated Apathy to Renewed Vigour?

India-Latin America and the Caribbean relations are in a prudent transition. The relations between the two in the past had been one of a cultivated indifference and apathy. Historically since India's independence, India and the countries of the LAC region managed to be in different camps, especially during the Cold War due to the pursuance of certain ideology. However, despite the differences, India and LAC countries did not share any painful historical baggage per se. In the post-Soviet era, both sides sought for alliances free of ideology, and certain countries from the region emerged as possible partners. The government of India with its economic goal in mind, initiated the Focus LAC programme meant to strengthen this relationship. Of late, the government-to-government links have become stronger, creating a scenario for potential associations. Both sides even refer to each other as 'strategic partners'. The paper attempts to understand and analyse the changed political and international contexts, if any for the altered perceptions on both sides. Also, to examine the role played by the Indian and LAC governments towards this 'emerging' relations. Finally, what are the other actor/actors present, and the role played by them in strengthening the relationship between India and LAC countries. Additionally, the paper also intends to raise questions as to whether there are other factors responsible for the ongoing bonhomie.

Dr. Priti Singh, Associate Professor, Centre for Canadian, US & Latin American Studies, JNU



Priti Singh is Chairperson and Associate Professor in Latin American Studies at the Centre for Canadian, US and Latin American Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Besides a book titled *Governance of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America* (2002) based on field work in Brazil (1998-99) and edited volumes--*Indigenous Identity and Activism* (2009); *The Contemporary Caribbean: Issues and Challenges* (2013); and *The Invisible Community: Being South Asian in Quebec* (2021), she has published a number of short monographs including co-editing a special issue of a journal titled *Canadian Diversity* on inclusive societies in India and Quebec (2013). In 2008 she was invited as Visiting Scholar by University of British Columbia to lecture on Indian tribal communities. Recipient of Australia India Council's Senior Fellowship (2003), and Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute's Canadian Studies Faculty Research Fellowship (2008) she has been engaged in research on issues of identity, diversity and foreign policy. Currently, she teaches specialized courses on Latin America at JNU.

**Paper on
India's Development Partnership with the Caribbean**

Amb. Skand Tayal, Former Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan



Ambassador (Retd) Skand Ranjan Tayal is a graduate of Allahabad University and has a Post-Graduate Degree in Chemistry from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

After joining the Indian Foreign Service (1976), Ambassador Tayal served in Indian Missions in Sofia, Warsaw, Geneva and Moscow. He was India's Consul General in Johannesburg (1996-98) and Houston (2002-05), and Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan (2005-08). He was Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea during 2008-11.

Ambassador Tayal was Secretary of the Indian National Commission for UNESCO during 1991-95 and served briefly as the Director in charge of IITs in the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. He was Joint Secretary (Consular, Passport and Visa) in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Chief Passport Officer of India during 1999-2002. He introduced far reaching reforms in the passport issue system including comprehensive computerization, machine printing of passports and Tatkal Scheme for fast track issue of passports.

Ambassador Tayal has wide experience in both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and has been a frequent speaker on contemporary affairs. He regularly writes for academic journals and Asian Age

Amb. Tayal was on the Board of Hindustan Shipyard Limited (Vizag) and MMTC Limited as an independent director during 2013-16 and is Chairperson of the India-Republic of Korea Friendship Society. He was also Chairman of the Governing Board of Dyal Singh College in New Delhi during 2013-16. He was a Visiting professor in the Delhi University during 2013-16.

Ambassador Tayal has authored a book 'India and Republic of Korea: Engaged Democracies' which was released in December 2013 by the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India.

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Dr. Athar Zafar, Senior Research Fellow, ICWA



Dr. Athar Zafar is a Senior Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi. He is engaged in academic research on Central Asia and South Caucasus regions. His studies also include Afghanistan, Iran and Russia, especially from connectivity perspective.

Apart from academic activities, at the Council he coordinates the annual India-Central Asia Dialogue held at Track II as well as ICWA's participation in the annual SCO Forum and other meetings.

Before joining ICWA he was associated with BBC. He has done his Ph. D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He also knows Persian and Tajiki languages.

He was invited as an International Observer to the parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan in 2019 and Presidential elections in 2021.

Dr. Angira Sen Sharma, Assistant Professor, Allahabad University



Dr. Angira Sen Sarma is presently working as Assistant Professor, Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj. Prior to joining the University of Allahabad, she worked as Assistant Professor at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She also worked as a researcher at Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. She received her Ph.D.degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her primary areas of research are Central Asia, Afghanistan, Energy Politics and Global Governance.

Abstract

Connect Central Asia: Building on Traditional Goodwill

Since 2000, there is a greater momentum in re-engaging with the “extended neighbourhood” of Central Asia. From a lukewarm start in the 1990s, the partnership is witnessing a substantial shift in the past few years. We share deep historical and civilizational linkages; however, the traditional goodwill did not reflect in our partnership post-independence of these republics. There are efforts today to develop closer ties at bilateral and multilateral levels with the Central Asian Republics. India enjoys immense ‘soft power’ influence in the region, which if carefully harnessed will help India to establish its geo-political foothold in the region. The multidimensional approach of India–Central Asia engagement is the cornerstone of a meaningful partnership.

Amb Anil Trigunayat, Former Ambassador of India to Libya and Jordan



Amb. Anil Trigunayat is a member of the Indian Foreign Service. He has served in the Indian Missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Bangladesh, Mongolia, USA, Russia, Sweden and Nigeria, Libya and Jordan. In the Ministry of External Affairs he has worked in the Economic, West Asia and North Africa and Consular Divisions. He also served as Director General/Joint Secretary for the Gulf & Haj Divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. Thereafter, Mr. Trigunayat worked as Deputy Chief of Mission in the rank of Ambassador in the Embassy of India, Moscow Prior to his superannuation in May 2016, he served as Ambassador of India to Jordan and Libya and High Commissioner to Malta (June 2012 – May 2016). He is a post Graduate in Physics from the Agra/Kumaon University and also studied Russian History, Culture and Language at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. As a visiting fellow he also conducted research work on “WTO and Regional Trading Blocs” at the Oxford University. He is a member of the All India Management Association/Delhi Management Association as well as that of Oxford and Cambridge Society of India and the Association of Indian Diplomats (former Ambassadors). He is also the Honorary Member of the International Trade Council, Brussels.

Ms Priya Singh, Associate Director and Programme Coordinator, Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata



Priya Singh is Associate Director at Asia in Global Affairs (AGA). Priya has been Fellow at the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata, an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India (2002-2016). She has been a Researcher in a three-year project entitled, A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's North East Policy conducted by Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung in collaboration with the Calcutta Research Group,

wherein she focused on the Belt and Road Initiative and India's response to the same. Priya is a political scientist with a linguistic understanding of some of the regions she covers. Her research encompasses issues pertaining to geo-politics, geo-economics, borders studies, governance, nationalism and post-nationalism, identity, state formation and linkages as well as disconnects in West Asia/Middle East in particular but also in a wider Asian context. She has been a part of several academic trips to West Asia and has authored, edited and co-edited books on Israel and the wider region. Her research work has also been published in peer-reviewed journals and as book chapters.

Abstract

Reading India's Look West Policy via a Humanitarian, Development and Peace Lens

Much has been debated about India's altered perception of West Asia, in recent times. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Israel in 2017 has been perceived as a break with the past in terms of India's conventional approach towards the region. Then again, consecutive visits to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, and Oman have been interpreted as pointers of a new outreach to all significant actors within the region. These gestures have been inferred in various quarters as indicators of a fundamental change in Indian foreign policy towards the region. As a consequence, the 'Look West Policy' both as a concept and policy has gained ground among analysts. The paper will attempt to read the multiple layers within the 'Look West Policy' through the lens of humanitarian aid, development assistance and peace building.

Prof. Kingshuk Chatterjee, Professor, Department of History, University of Calcutta



Kingshuk Chatterjee is a Professor in the Department of History, Calcutta University, and is associated with the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies, Kolkata. He has previously served as a Founding Professor in the Department of History, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shiv Nadar University and as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Chatterjee's area of expertise is in Middle Eastern politics

and he specialises in Political Islam in the Modern World. He is the author of *Ali Shari'ati and the Shaping of Political Islam in Iran* and *A Split in the Middle: the Making of the Political Centre in Iran (1987-2004)*. Chatterjee also writes and speaks extensively on Indian politics and foreign policy in academic journals, newspapers and electronic media.

Abstract

India and the Middle East: The Bridge that Remains to be Built

The two regions of South Asia and the West Asia have emerged as physically distinct regions only in the last couple of centuries. The present frontiers of the countries in the two regions have emerged only in course of the 20th century, and more particularly in the second half. Till such time, millions had moved for ages, back and forth across the two regions. Carrying goods and commodities, seeking opportunities and better conditions of life, the Arabian Sea and the overland trade route connecting India with the West Asia was substantive enough to allow people to settle down in each other's lands. As frontiers hardened in the 20th century, innumerable such families were literally split among 3 or 4 countries, becoming citizens of several countries of South and West Asia. Despite several centuries of regular commercial exchanges and socio-cultural interactions right down to the period of the Raj, India's engagement with the region only after the initiation of India's economic liberalisation in the 1990s, responding to the needs of India's energy security and expatriate workers working out of the region.

This essay is divided into three parts. The first section of the essay deals with the state of India's engagement with West Asia through the channels of commodity exchange and growing possibilities in the strategic level. It then goes on to look at the manner in which a human bridge has actually connected these two regions over several centuries, and can be deployed to increase Indian soft power in the region exponentially. It also suggests how such an engagement could actually be fostered through creative use of networks and media already in existence.

Dr. Deepika Saraswat, Associate Fellow, West Asia Center, MPIDSA



Dr. Deepika Saraswat is Associate Fellow at the West Asia Center, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. Her research interests include Iran's geopolitics in Middle East and Eurasia and interpenetration of religion and politics in postcolonial contexts. Dr Saraswat's research project at MP-IDSA is on 'Iran's Asian Orientation: Quest for Status and Regional Cooperation.

Dr. Saraswat has a PhD in Political Geography from Centre for International Politics Organisation and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Earlier, she was Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (March 2018-October 2021). Her book titled 'Between Survival and Status: The Counter-hegemonic Geopolitics of Iran' was jointly published by the Indian Council of World Affairs and Macmillan Education in January 2022.

Abstract

India's Development Partnership with Iran and Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities

In the Persian Gulf region, Iran and Iraq have shared traditionally friendly and close ties with India. In recent years, India's development cooperation with Iran, primarily focused on regional connectivity, has faced challenges from the US sanctions on Iran. In Iraq, India's development role has remained stagnant even as Iraq remains India's top crude oil supplier. China for its part has signed a 25-Year strategic cooperation agreement with Iran. Similarly, after the US combat role ended in Iraq in 2020, Beijing has emerged as foremost development actor in the country, signing oil-for-project deals to build 1000 schools and power stations. However, concerns about growing Chinese profile has prompted these countries to pursue diversification strategies and India as a major buyer of oil can step up its response-oriented and project specific development partnership. In the Persian Gulf region, India's development partnership has to be linked to strategic and geoeconomic interests, especially energy security and regional connectivity, while also contributing to stability in the extended neighbourhood.