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VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Call on External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar by 23 IFS Officers of the 2010 batch attending the MCTP-II at SSIFS on 26-06-26



The Special Course for 36 Diplomats from Algeria, Libya, and Syria at SSIFS during 08-17 June 2026



FROM DEAN'S DESK



Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

Month of June saw a diverse set of programs at SSIFS - we had a 10 days program for 36 diplomats from Algeria, Libya, and Syria; a two weeks mid-career training program for 2010 batch of 25 IFS officers; and the commencement of 12 weeks long phase II of Induction Training Program of 50 IFS Officer Trainees of 2025 batch. All three programs were designed differently given the diverse levels and needs of three groups of participants. Themes, experts, methodology all variables of program design were matched to the training needs of the participants. This diversity in program design and delivery makes the work at SSIFS so interesting and satisfying.

The program for diplomats from Algeria, Libya, and Syria focused on Infrastructure Development, Artificial Intelligence, Economic, Environmental, Cultural, and Public Diplomacy. The idea was to give the participants pathways in each of these areas to explore and excel in a self-reliant manner.

The MCTP II was designed in two weeks - first, focused on foreign policy & diplomacy, and second, on leadership and Viksit Bharat mindset. In two weeks, officers could meet 15 serving senior colleagues from the foreign service and five former Indian Ambassadors. They also interacted with 30 experts, policy-makers, innovators, and entrepreneurs during the leadership module. The methodology adopted was to give the mid-career IFS officers, experiential learning opportunities during the program in which they collaborated & communicated, showed their confidence & commitment, and most importantly understood the importance of compassion. The interaction with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar was a masterclass in Diplomacy for Viksit Bharat. The Foreign Secretary guided the officers with the trinity of thought: Creativity through Technology Diplomacy, Sustenance through Traditional Diplomacy, and Reforms through Transformational Diplomacy. Leadership week included a day each on Strategic Analysis & Critical Thinking, Functional & Behavioural Competencies, Traditions & Transformations, Technology & Talent, and Trade & Tourism. Literally, nothing more could be packed in a short program like this. We are sure the MCTP II would help the IFS officers of the 2010 batch to transition from "success to significance" as mentioned by the Foreign Secretary.

The Phase II of the Induction Training Program for IFS Officer Trainees is designed to provide a higher degree of immersion for developing diplomatic niche skills in negotiations, communication, management, problem-solving, and purposeful leadership. In June, the focus was on multilateral diplomacy, mission attachment, and communication skills. Next month will be focused on economic diplomacy in the 3Ts of Trade, Technology, & Tourism, and cultural & public diplomacy.

One can see that SSIFS provides full-spectrum professional programs based on the needs of the participants, both from home and abroad. We look forward to continuously upgrading our programs based on the fast changing global landscape. Our new digital lab at SSIFS, done in collaboration with the Capacity Building Commission, is a step in that direction. Our approach of "whole of nation" in capacity building is guiding us to be available always for meaningful cooperation with institutions where we can add true value. One example of such partnership with Kumaraguru Institutions in Coimbatore is mentioned in this newsletter. Focusing of continued growth, we extend best wishes to the readers of this newsletter from SSIFS family!

Raj Kusmar Srivastava
New Delhi
30 June 2026

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

Special Course for 36 Diplomats from Algeria, Libya, & Syria (8-17 June 2026)

A Special Course for Diplomats from North Africa and West Asia (Algeria, Libya and Syria) was conducted at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 08-17 June 2026. 21 diplomats from Algeria, 10 from Libya and 06 from Syria participated in the 10-day long special course. Dean (SSIFS), Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava inaugurated the Course. He informed the participants that the training programme was designed to highlight India's expanding engagement with Africa and West Asia, while equipping participants with a deeper understanding of contemporary global challenges. The programme focused on critical issues such as evolving geopolitical dynamics, economic resilience, digital governance, climate action, and sustainable development. Emphasizing the growing significance of India–Africa relations, he noted that India's engagement with African countries is rooted in historical ties of solidarity, South–South cooperation, and a shared commitment to inclusive growth and development. Over the years, this partnership has expanded across diverse sectors, including capacity building, trade and investment, healthcare, education, digital connectivity and renewable energy.



Knowledge Sessions and Institutional Visits

The ten-day programme featured 22 knowledge sessions covering international and regional issues such as the evolution and advancement of India-Africa's dynamic partnerships, Indo-African regional frameworks for maritime security, India's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations during times of crises, global disaster trends and role of the national Disaster Management Authority of India in relief operations, the organisation and management of multilateral events, need for sustainable tourism for Global South, artificial intelligence, public diplomacy and communication skills, cultural diplomacy for Global South, new agri-tech measures, building resilient infrastructure and main-streaming risk reduction in economies, blue economy and ocean governance. Thematic sessions also focussed on the India-Africa SPIRIT and our development priorities. Speakers for this programme included experts from government organisations, prominent think-tanks, serving officers of MEA and industry specialists.



To deepen their understanding of Indian democracy, participants visited the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, a public museum showcasing the contributions of India's Prime Ministers since independence. The delegation was highly impressed by the museum's innovative and immersive experiential displays. In addition to the above, the delegation also visited the Gatishakti Lab, Abubhuti Kendra at Bharat Mandapam. The Anubhuti Kendra serves as an experiential centre designed to showcase India's industrial and economic transformation through immersive and interactive exhibits. During this visit, the group was able to appreciate the key initiatives of India aimed at fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, multi-modal connectivity and manufacturing growth. By combining digital installations, data visualisation, and narrative storytelling, the Anubhuti Kendra provided the delegates with a comprehensive understanding of policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and the broader vision driving India's economic development.



A highlight of this programme was the visit to National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE). The institute is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) that is mandated to undertake research and development in solar energy technologies, facilitate capacity-building initiatives, and promote the development and deployment of innovative solar products and applications. This visit underscored the multifaceted activities of the institute to the delegates and NISE's role in advancing India's renewable energy objectives and supporting the transition towards sustainable energy systems.



A day-long module was specially curated for this programme at RIS--Research and Information System for Developing Countries—the premier "think tank of Global South with emphasis on, impact and solutions for fellow developing countries." Speakers here included experts and economists on international trade negotiations, India's agriculture policies and maritime security frameworks who comprehensively engaged with the delegation across the diverse perspectives of economic diplomacy.



Fostering Cultural Diplomacy during Special Course for Diplomats from North Africa and West Asia

To promote cultural diplomacy and strengthen people-to-people ties between India and the three participating countries, the programme incorporated a series of knowledge sessions alongside curated field visits. A highlight of the academic component was a lecture on cultural diplomacy in the Global South delivered by Ms Manisha Swami, Deputy Director General (Culture), ICCR. In her address, she examined the role of cultural diplomacy as an instrument of international engagement and highlighted India's multifaceted initiatives aimed at deepening diplomatic and cultural relations with countries across the Global South. Emphasizing the historical and civilisational linkages that bind India with these nations, she underscored the importance of fostering sustained dialogue, cultural exchange, and collaborative partnerships to strengthen regional solidarity. This was followed by a lecture-demonstration on Odissi, one of the eight classical dances of India, by Ms Reela Hota, an acclaimed performer and educator of Odissi. Through her performance, Ms Hota explained the therapeutics and aesthetics associated with Indian classical dances leading to a lyrical blend of spirituality with arts.









The delegation also visited Gandhi Smriti as part of the programme that gave them an opportunity to engage with the life, philosophy, and enduring legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, whose principles of non-violence, peace, and social justice continue to influence global discourse and diplomatic practice.





Special Course for Diplomats from Algeria, Libya, & Syria
Valedictory Session

Dean (SSIFS), highlighted the key outcomes of the training programme and underscored its contribution to enhancing participants' understanding of contemporary policy challenges and opportunities. Beyond facilitating knowledge exchange, the programme served as an important platform for exchanging perspectives on common developmental challenges, fostering professional and institutional networks, and strengthening diplomatic engagement among India and the participating countries, namely Algeria, Libya and Syria. It also provided an opportunity for participants to explore avenues for future collaboration among Global South. During the valedictory, each of the three delegations made a presentation on a significant theme discussed during the programme namely technology and development in Global South, maritime and energy security, and cooperation within Global South with suggestions for further collaboration between India and their respective countries.





At the conclusion of the programme, certificates of participation were awarded to all participants. The participants collectively observed that the programme had provided valuable insights into the evolving policy landscape of African and West Asian nations and effectively addressed a range of contemporary issues relevant to governance, development, and international cooperation. They further noted that the cultural and institutional visits enriched the learning experience by complementing the academic sessions with practical exposure and cultural context. These engagements offered participants a deeper appreciation of India's rich historical heritage, social diversity, and developmental journey, thereby fostering greater mutual understanding and people-to-people connections.





Training Program for Indian Diplomats

MCTP II for IFS Officers of 2010 Batch (22 June - 10 July 2026)

The SSIFS commenced the Mid-Career Training Program-II (MCTP-II) for Indian Foreign Service officers of the 2010 Batch on 22 June 2026. Conducted from 22 June to 10 July 2026, the program is designed for officers with over 15 years of diplomatic experience who are preparing to assume greater responsibilities at the Joint Secretary level. Through interactions with senior policymakers, practitioners, domain experts, and thought leaders, the program seeks to strengthen strategic thinking, leadership capabilities, and policy expertise required for navigating an increasingly complex global environment.

The program opened with an interaction with Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri, who shared perspectives on the evolving contours of India's foreign policy and the leadership expectations from officers entering a more senior phase of their careers. Participants were welcomed by Shri Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean, SSIFS, who emphasized the importance of continuous professional development and lifelong learning in diplomacy.

The first week of the program focused on key geopolitical, strategic, and foreign policy challenges confronting India. Distinguished speakers led discussions Energy Diplomacy, Defence Diplomacy, and the key foreign policy challenges and opportunities.

A significant focus of the program was India's engagement with its immediate neighbourhood. Dedicated sessions explored India's relations with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and Bhutan, highlighting the strategic importance of regional stability, connectivity, and development partnerships. These discussions provided participants with valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with advancing India's Neighbourhood First policy. Sessions on Cyber Security and Cyber Diplomacy examined the growing role of technology in international relations and the need for effective governance frameworks in the digital domain. Discussions on Citizen-Centric Consular Services highlighted the increasing importance of public service delivery as a key component of diplomatic engagement. Participants additionally benefited from an interaction with the Ministry's Official Spokesperson, gaining practical insights into strategic communication, media engagement, and public diplomacy.



Training Program for Indian Diplomats

MCTP II for IFS Officers of 2010 Batch (22 June - 10 July 2026)

A special highlight of the program was an interaction with External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, who underscored the importance of preparing a foreign policy for Viksit Bharat. He mentioned that as they assume greater responsibilities in service, their experience, capabilities and judgements become all the more important.

The second week of the program focused on the leadership and Viksit Bharat mindset. On 29 June, participants undertook a full-day Strategic Analysis and Critical Thinking Exercise conducted by NatStrat and curated by Ambassador Pankaj Saran.

On 30 June, the program continued with sessions on Functional Competencies for Diplomacy, leadership development, personal effectiveness, and the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in diplomatic practice.

Amb Sibi George, Secretary(West), gave a very intense case study from his experience in Japan on how to run Indian Missions with a sense of purpose and resolve towards Viksit Bharat.

The program will continue into the first and second week of July with sessions on cultural diplomacy, science and technology diplomacy, trade diplomacy, and other contemporary themes, along with the State Attachment.



Experiential Learning Table-top Exercise by NatStrat for MCTP-II

On 29 June 2026, NatStrat was invited by the SSIFS to conduct a Table-top Exercise for MCTP-II for the IFS Officers of the 2010 Batch. The TTX gave the opportunity to discuss the value of questioning assumptions, seeing the bigger picture, and making sound decisions in a complex world. A full day exercise with Amb Pankaj Saran as curator and Amb Vikas Swarup as Mentor could not have been better organised for this group of IFS officers who are soon going to lead the policy-making portfolios within the Ministry and as HoMs abroad.








Mid-Career Training Program
(MCTP-II)
22 June - 10 July 2026
Foreign Policy Module
IFS Officers
2010 Batch
22 -26 June 2026
JNB & SSIFS


IFS Officers
Batch of 2010
29 June - 03 July July 2026
SSIFS & Bharat Mandapam


Monday
22 June
Call on
Foreign Secretary
Shri Vikram Misri
Monday
22 June
Defence Diplomacy
Amb Sujan R. Chinoy
DG MP-IDSA
Call on EAM
Functional
Competencies
for
Diplomats
Indian Foreign
Policy &
Diplomacy in
Practice
Tuesday
23 June
Energy Diplomacy
Amb Sunjay Sudhir


Mid-Career Training Program (MCTP-II)
Leadership Module
Strategic Analysis
and Critical Thinking
Agentic AI for
Smarter Diplomacy
Monday
29 June
Strategic Analysis &
Critical Thinking
Amb Pankaj Saran
Tuesday
30 June
Agentic AI for Smarter
Diplomacy
Aatmanirbhar
Viksit
Bharat
Friday
03 July
Trade
Diplomacy for
Viksit Bharat
Wednesday
01 July
Cultural Diplomacy of
Ek Bharat
Shreshtha Bharat
Thursday
02 July
Science and Technology Diplomacy
for Aatmanirbhar Bharat
Dr. Arabinda Mitra







Mission Attachment (IFS OTs 2025 Batch) (22-26 June 2026)
Some excerpts from the creative writing reports by Officer Trainees



Russia has stayed in the Indian imagination as a friend and partner for a long time. As a student of International Relations and Politics, I have long been fascinated by Russia, and this glimpse of its reality has only deepened that curiosity. Moving across institutions during our mission attachment let us distil something of Russian society in a short span of time. As with any good experience, Russia has left me wanting more: more of this life as a diplomat, a traveller, a bureaucrat. As Pushkin asked in Eugene Onegin, "Who would grasp Russia only with the mind?".

Shreya Tyagi



Shubham

The most enduring lesson from our attachment to Vietnam lay not in geopolitics or economics, but in the central role of women in nation-building. Across every official and unofficial engagement government offices, businesses, universities, markets, airports, museums, and hospitality—we witnessed women participating confidently and visibly in the workforce and public life. Vietnam's female labour force participation rate stands at nearly 70 per cent, almost double India's around 35 per cent. The dividends of this participation were visible everywhere. Higher female workforce participation translates into greater household incomes, stronger domestic demand, and a more productive economy. Equally important, it creates vibrant and inclusive public spaces, with women actively engaged in commerce, services, and local enterprises, making cities feel safer, more welcoming, and more tourist-friendly. If India seeks to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat, increasing women's participation in the workforce must become not only a social imperative but an economic and strategic priority. Vietnam's experience demonstrates that empowering women is not simply a matter of equity, rather it is a force multiplier for national development. That, perhaps, was the most valuable lesson our host had to offer, and one that deserves to travel home with us.



We departed Colombo carrying far more than briefing notes and photographs. We carried the conviction that India's relationship with Sri Lanka is not a matter of statecraft alone, but of shared civilisational memory, mutual vulnerability, and a steadfast commitment to each other's futures. As officer trainees, this attachment offered us an unforgettable, foundational lesson: that the truest diplomacy is patient, generous, and unfailingly present in times of need.

Namrata Jeph



Rohit Singhal

The Mission Attachment provided a comprehensive understanding of the breadth and complexity of India–Nepal relations. Beyond diplomacy, it highlighted the importance of development cooperation, defence engagement, trade facilitation, public diplomacy and cultural exchanges. The combination of official briefings, project visits and field exposure enabled us to appreciate the practical dimensions of bilateral engagement and reinforced the importance of sustained dialogue, mutual sensitivity and people centric initiatives. Overall, the attachment significantly enriched our understanding of India's Neighbourhood First Policy and the continuous efforts required to further strengthen this unique and enduring partnership.



Beyond understanding China, the attachment offered valuable lessons about the practice of diplomacy itself. I observed that preparation enhances credibility, listening improves understanding, and sustained relationship-building is essential for diplomatic engagement. Interactions with senior officers also demonstrated that diplomacy is ultimately a people-centric profession that requires professionalism, adaptability and empathy in equal measure.

Devika P.

Mission Attachment (IFS OTs 2025 Batch) in Pictures





Vietnam













Nepal







RoK







Sri Lanka





Mission Attachment (IFS OTs 2025 Batch) in Pictures



Russia



France



Switzer
-land





China



38th Graduation Ceremony of the KCT-BS Coimbatore

Amb Raj K Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS), was invited by Shri Shankar Vanavarayar, the President of Kumaraguru Institutions, to be the Chief Guest at the 38th Graduation ceremony of KCT Business School's class of 2025. In his speech to the graduating students, he brought a deeply philosophical and global perspective. He reminded them that the most important leadership journey begins inward, with the mastery of body and mind. Drawing from ancient Indian wisdom, including Patanjali's Yogasutra, he emphasised self-awareness as the foundation of effective action. He also spoke of frameworks that were both timeless and practical: The Five Cs: Competence, Confidence, Communication, Commitment, and Compassion; The Five Ps: Process, Protocol, Problem-solving, Progressive learning, and Purposeful leadership. Among all, he elevated compassion as the highest form of emotional intelligence and a defining strength of India's global identity. His closing thought was particularly powerful: Do not be bound by rules, rise to your roles. And ultimately, he reinforced a vision of India not just as an emerging economy, but as a civilizational contributor to global well-being, rooted in peace, prosperity, and purpose. Some glimpses of the ceremony:



Forthcoming Program at SSIFS



73rd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats

21 September - 02 October 2026

The professional course aims to equip participants with knowledge and perspectives on new trends in diplomacy, topical international and regional issues, diplomatic skills and competencies, and to familiarise them with India's history, culture, and foreign policy. As the 1st flagship program started by SSIFS in 1992, the 73rd edition of the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) this year will continue to affirm the commitment of India to its friendly countries in sharing the knowledge and expertise acquired in the field of diplomatic training.

25 Knowledge Sessions with Experts in International issues drawn from Diplomacy, International Institutions & Think Tanks

Table Top & Simulation Exercises, Discussion with faculties from Institutions on issues such as Global Biofuels Alliance, Disaster Management, International Solar Alliance initiatives,

Understanding India through visits to heritage sites in UP & MP, session on Ayurveda, enjoying its diverse culture & cuisines



About Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) was established in 1986 by the Government of India primarily to cater to the professional training needs of the Indian Foreign Service and the Ministry of External Affairs. SSIFS has diversified its activities to include courses for foreign diplomats in its efforts to build bridges of friendship and cooperation with countries around the world and courses of interest to staff and officers at all levels of the Ministry of External Affairs as well as other Civil Services.

Within Indian Foreign Service, SSIFS conducts training programs annually at four levels - Induction Training Program of nine months for IFS Officer Trainees at entry level, and Mid Career Training Programs of three weeks duration - MCTP I (for 10-11 years in Service), MCTP II (for 15-16 years in Service), & MCTP III (for 24-25 years in Service).

For Foreign Diplomats, SSIFS conducts every month one specific program which includes three annual flagship programs in the form of - Disarmament & International Security Affairs Fellowship Training program for three weeks, Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) for two weeks, and Global South Young Diplomats Forum (GSYDF) Training Program for two weeks. Other months, SSIFS organises country, region, grouping, or themes-specific training programs of a maximum of two weeks, emanating from 108 MoUs that SSIFS has signed in the past three decades.

SSIFS has an extensive and expanding pool of guest faculty drawn from experts in the fields of domain competencies like International Relations, Diplomacy, Economy, Trade, Tourism, Technology, Governance, Media & Journalism, Defence & Security, Culture & Indian Knowledge System, Yoga & Ayurveda, and Behavioural Competencies like Emotional Intelligence, Purposeful & Collaborative Leadership, Communications & Negotiations Skills and Progressive Learning & Problem Solving Attitude.

SSIFS is headed by the Dean, a senior Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of External Affairs. The current Dean is Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, IFS officer of the 1997 batch. The Institute is located at Baba Gangnath Marg, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi.



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