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VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

The 4th edition of Sushma Swaraj Lectures on Introduction to India was held at SSIFS in collaboration with India Foundation on 19 November 2025, in which 24 diplomats from 21 resident Missions in New Delhi participated



A week-long orientation program for 16 Defence Attache Designates was organised on 24-28 November 2025 at SSIFS



FROM DEAN'S DESK



Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

November 2025 was another month of intense activities for SSIFS, with five programs for 136 participants held throughout the month. These included the second week of the program for 45 diplomats from 21 countries in Central & South America & Caribbean Island countries, a week-long special program for 14 diplomats from BIMSTEC countries, a week-long orientation program for 16 Defence Attache Designates to Indian Missions abroad, a one-day program of 4th edition of the Sushma Swaraj Lectures on Introduction to India for 24 recently arrived Diplomats from 21 resident missions in New Delhi, and a half-day program for 37 young Indian Diaspora visitors from 14 countries in the 83rd edition of the Know India Program.

The diversity of these programs in terms of both content as well as participants clearly points to the fact that the more and better we do more and better we get. We have endeavoured to make every program customised to the needs and expectations of the participants. In doing so, our expanding list of visiting faculties and partner institutions plays the most empowering role for SSIFS.

On 4th November, SSIFS added to its list of partnerships, the 106th one, with the MoU on Training with Israel, during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Israel. In this Newsletter, we have included the list of these MoUs to provide a glimpse of the expanding role and responsibilities of SSIFS globally.

This month, I had the privilege to represent SSIFS and the Ministry of External Affairs in two important capacity-building conferences - One in Peru, the 51st International Forum for Diplomatic Training on 11-14 November and the other at LBSNAA, Mussoorie, the Conference of Central Training Institutes on 26-27 November. On both these occasions, we shared our new initiatives and best practices and learnt from others' important ideas for replicating at SSIFS.

In December, we begin the 9-month-long Induction Training Program for the 52-member-strong 2025 batch of IFS, along with 2 diplomats from Bhutan. It's the largest batch of IFS so far, which requires special attention for the size and diversity that the batch brings, with 20 Indian States and Union Territories represented, and over one-third of them being female Officer Trainees. The batch also brings diverse academic backgrounds as well, with 24 engineers, 4 medical doctors, 17 humanities, and 7 science & commerce graduates. We also have a special functional competencies training program for our friends from Mauritius and Seychelles, too, in December. A busy year ending with a busy December, and we at SSIFS can not wish better. Best wishes for the festive season ahead from the SSIFS Family.

Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
30 November 2025

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

1st Special Course for Diplomats from Central & South America and Caribbean Islands (CSACI)

The ten-day-long special course was attended by 45 diplomats from 21 countries from CSACI region and CARICOM Secretariat. The programme was designed to equip participants with knowledge and perspectives on issues related with various aspects of diplomacy, disaster risk reduction, blue economy, climate action & SDGs through classroom sessions, table top exercises conducted by experts and professionals drawn from diplomacy and prominent Institutions/think tanks and on-site visits. Research & Information Systems for Developing Countries (RIS), an autonomous think tank focused on issues of Global South conducted day-long sessions on common challenges for Global South countries including a session on DAKSHIN (Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative) that was launched during the 1st Voice of Global South Summit in 2023 as a Global South Centre of Excellence to mobilize the Global South towards human-centric development. Some glimpses from the knowledge sessions are presented below :



1st Special Course for Diplomats from CSACI

Study Visit to Confederation of Indian Industry and PradhanmantriSanghralaya

Visits to two prominent Institutions were arranged for the diplomats from CSACI region to impart knowledge through experiential learning and on-site interactions. The diplomats had a half-day attachment with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), an industry-led business organization where they interacted with CII officers to learn about the collaboration potential between the region and India. The 2nd visit was to the Pradhanmantri Sanghralaya to gain an understanding of the Indian democratic system. The diplomats enjoyed the high-tech experiential displays chronicling the transformative journey of Indian democracy and describing the contributions of the Prime Ministers of India since Independence.






Cultural Diplomacy: Building Synergies

A lecture on ICCR's 'Cultural Diplomacy for Global South' was given by Ms. Manish Swami, DDG (Culture), ICCR, in which she highlighted the role of ICCR in strengthening cultural relations and building mutual understanding between the CSACI region and India. This was followed by a Lecture cum Demonstration Session by Ms.Moumala Nayak, a senior Kathak dancer and ICCR empanelled artist and a disciple of the renowned Pandit Birju Maharaj. She explained how Kathak, deriving its name from Katha or story, became an expression of storytelling in ancient India. She emphasised the ancient tradition of Natyashastra, discussing the nava rasas (nine emotions) and hastamudras (hand gestures) that convey universal human experiences such as love, devotion, humour, and conflict. The diplomats deeply appreciated the lecture cum demonstration on Indian classical dance and traditions, and drew parallels between the footwork of Kathak dance with some of the popular dances in their region.




1st Special Course from CSACI countries
Visit to Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh from 01-02 November, 2025

SSIFS organised a two-day study visit for the 45 diplomats participating in the 1st Special Course from CSACI countries to the vibrant and historic city of Lucknow in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Day 01: The group began its tour with a visit to the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, a premier public business school of India and had an elaborate interactive session with the Chairperson & Faculty to learn and discuss about the opportunities for collaboration with their respective countries.




Next, the diplomats visited the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University The delegation visited Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, one of the largest technical universities in India, established by the state of Uttar Pradesh in 2000. AKTU has around 800 colleges affiliated to it in Uttar Pradesh. The delegates visited its Centre for Advanced Studies, where they were captivated by the state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities such as the robotics lab, cyber security lab, automation lab, and the innovation hub for research and development of latest technologies. The diplomats deeply appreciated that the research facilities are being made available to the university students as well as to researchers across the State of Uttar Pradesh.






1st Special Course from CSACI countries Visit to Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh from 01-02 November, 2025







The next stop for the delegation was the HCL City, which is situated in the Special Economic Zone region in Chack Gajaria in Lucknow. HCL, the next generation global technology company, has a 100 acre campus In Lucknow, one of its largest in India, with over 11,000 employees. of the city. It was heartening for the delegates to learnt that besides being a leader in technology, HCL undertakes various initiatives as part of its corporate social responsibility like use of solar energy, zero waste generation, education for the underprivileged, and healthcare and housing for its employees. The delegation was happy to tour its offices, housing facilities for employees and other recreational facilities which make the work environment congenial, convenient and comfortable.



The delegation had a magnificent end of the day with a mesmerizing Kathak performance at a heritage and art deco boutique hotel, Hotel Lebua Lucknow and a specially curated dinner comprising of delectable culinary heritage cuisine of Lucknow, the Royal Awadhi cuisine. It was a pleasant coincidence that the visit of this delegation coincided with Lucknow being added to UNESCO's Global network as a 'City of Gastronomy' honoring its world famous distinguished culinary heritage on 31 Oct 2025. The cultural evening hosted by Invest UP showcased two rich heritages of the State of Uttar Pradesh - its classical dance Kathak and unique Gastronomy.



Day 02: On the second day of their visit, the delegation undertook a heritage tour of the old citycomprising Bada Imambada complex and Rumi Darwaza. The delegation appreciated the Indo Saracenic architectural style found in Lucknow that is reflective of the city's cultural amalgamation. They were informed of the engineering marvel of the Bada Imambada, its famous maze (Bhool Bhulaiyya) & the stepwell (Shahi Baoli).
Uttar Pradesh Tourism also felicitated the delegates with specially crafted souvenirs from the State under its One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.







The last visit of the educational tour was to the Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design and Research. Ms Kshipra Shukla, Chairperson welcomed the delegation and led them through the special exhibition put up by the local artisans displaying various traditional handicrafts and products such as marble inlay, zari-zardozi work, chikankaari, wooden block printing and metal craft. The delegation was impressed by the ODOP scheme of the UP government which aims to promote product-specific industrial hubs across the 75 districts of the state and boost the indigenous handicrafts of the region. The delegation learned how UPIDR is helping artisans and small enterprises through the initiative of ODOP. The delegation also toured UPIDR's museums that housed crafts from across the state.

Visit to Agra by the participants of 1st Special Course for CSACI course

Continuing with their cultural and historical explorations, the delegation visited Agra on 5 Nov to see the Taj Mahal, the finest example of Mughal architecture and were awed by its beautiful facade, grand size, intricate carvings on the marble structure and use of pietra dura (inlay work).


विदेशी प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने उप डिजाइन एवं शोध संस्थान का किया भ्रमण


45 सदस्यीय राजनयिक प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने किया लखनऊ का भ्रमण



1st Special Course for Diplomats from Central & South America and Caribbean Islands

Visit of the diplomats to Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (some news items that appeared in local media)

Diplomats explores UP's academic, investment sys



Hindustan Times

EXPLORING INVESTMENT AVENUES

Team of diplomats visits state capital

Final Day of the Program: A Panel Discussion on 'New Age Diplomacy' & the Valedictory

As a special opportunity, the participants had an occasion to interact and learn from the experiences of residents Ambassadors of Colombia & Costa Rica, and High Commissioner of Jamaica who joined the Panel Discussion on 'New Age Diplomacy' moderated by Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean SSIFS. Perspectives and advices on Cultural Convergence through Yoga, Ayurveda, Gastronomy, Dance; the 5Cs of Diplomacy to build 'New Age Partnerships' through Convergence on Global issues, Complementarity in problem solving, Cooperation Avenues, Citizen Connect & Emotional Dimension, Commonality of Challenges were shared.

Dean SSIFS conferred Valedictory certificates to the 45 diplomats from Central & South America and Caribbean Countries and CARICOM Secretariat for completing the 1st Special Course at SSIFS. The participants shared the experiences of their training and stay in India & expressed gratitude to the Government of India for the training opportunity. Amb Srivastava congratulated the participants & extended heartfelt wishes to them for all their future diplomatic endeavours.







Some Memories from the Valedictory Session








2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Member Countries

Inaugural Day

The 2nd Special Course for Diplomats from the BIMSTEC Member Countries was conducted at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 17-22 November 2025. 14 diplomats representing Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the 6-day long special course. Dean (SSIFS), Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava inaugurated the Course. In his inaugural session, he discussed the concept of 'diplomacy' & idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and elaborated on the pillars of the Indian Foreign Policy, Strategic Horizon, and Core Dimensions of its Resilience.

In his inaugural session, Dean SSIFS discussed the pillars of Indian Foreign Policy, the concept of Global South & India's initiatives within it, the Competency based Training at SSIFS & covered the 'Theories of International Relations' & their use in diplomacy. He also spoke about 4Ts (trade, technology, tourism, talent) of the 'Diplomacy for Development' and covered about Govt of India's initiatives - ISA, CDRI, IBSA, GBA along with discussing about BIMSTEC, its origin, purposes & aims as an organization.

The Special Course was designed to equip participants with the knowledge and perspectives on the 7 pillars of BIMSTEC namely, trade, investment, development, environment & climate change, people-to-people connect, agriculture & food security, science, technology, innovation & connectivity.



Knowledge Sessions and Institutional visits

The six-day-long special course included 15 knowledge sessions encompassing the seven pillars identified by BIMSTEC Member Countries. Eminent speakers and subject experts were selected for the knowledge sessions from prominent Institutions and Think Tanks. Retired and senior serving officers of MEA also contributed to knowledge sessions. The participants visited the National Disaster Management Authority to understand and learn about NDMA's role in disaster management through several case studies and discussed about the best practices that could be replicated by the Member Countries.

2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Member Countries

Understanding India through Cultural & Historical Explorations

The delegates visited the Pradhanmantri Sanghralaya to gain an understanding of Indian democratic system and landmark contributions made by each Prime Minister of India in navigating the nation through various challenges to ensure an all-round progress of India since its Independence. The diplomats enjoyed the high-tech experiential displays detailing these contributions.

On the last day of their program, the diplomats visited Agra on a day-long visit to see the Taj Mahal. The diplomats also visited UP Government Handicrafts outlet where few products from the One District One Product theme were displayed with artisans showing their craftsmanship.





2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Member Countries

Final Day of the Course - Reflections through Feedback & Valedictory

Amb Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary-General - BIMSTEC, spoke with the delegates on the ‘Priorities of BIMSTEC’ and highlighted various sectors of cooperation and the synergies between the nations in the Bay of Bengal region. He discussed the seven pillars of regional integration and underlined the commitments made by the Member Countries to boost initiatives such as connectivity, improved economic growth, ensuring sustainable development and setting up Centres of Excellence.

During the feedback session, each group presented insightful feedback and expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India for hosting this valuable program, which they see as ‘empowering young diplomats’ from the Bay of Bengal region through collaboration and knowledge-sharing. They underscored the need for impactful action to foster shared prosperity in the region.

As part of the Valedictory, Secretary-General, BIMSTEC handed over the certificates of participation to the diplomats and encouraged them to be the “Brand Ambassadors of BIMSTEC" in their respective countries & develop a sense of 'camaraderie & belongingness' to the wider BIMSTEC community for prosperity, stability & sustainable development across the region.







4th Edition of Sushma Swaraj Lectures held at SSIFS in partnership with India Foundation



The 4th edition of 'Sushma Swaraj Lectures on Introduction to India' was held at SSIFS on 19 November 2025, in which 24 diplomats from 21 resident Missions in New Delhi participated. The diplomats gained insightful perspectives on India's Foreign Policy, History, Polity, Economy and New World Order by renowned experts in respective fields - in 5 Knowledge & Wisdom Sessions.





83rd Edition of KIP hosted at SSIFS

SSIFS conducted a half-day orientation programme for 37 young Indian Diaspora visitors from 14 countries in the 83rd edition of the Know India Program (KIP) on 24 November. Dean(SSIFS) made two insightful presentations on "Ancient Bharat: Land of Knowledge" & "Vikshit Bharat: The Vision of Prosperity". The first presentation made by Amb Raj Srivastava gave the visitors a glimpse of their ancestral linkages & antiquity of their "motherland", the foundation of Vedic Civilization, energy of "Bharat" powered by the wisdom of Vedas & Upanishads, 04 goals of human life, forms of "dance" tracing their origin to Bharat Muni's Natyashastra, Ayurveda & Ayurgenomics. The second presentation focussed on guiding principles of the Indian Foreign Policy, the 4Ts (trade, technology, tourism & talent) of the 'Diplomacy for Development', Govt of India's recent initiatives (ISA, CDRI, IBCA, GBA), covered the 'Decade of Resurgent Bharat' & core Dimensions of its Resilience. India is marching strongly on its path of Viksit Bharat guided by ancient wisdom with human centric, environment sensitive, technologically advanced mindset.







51st International Forum for Diplomatic Training hosted by Peru

Dean (SSIFS) attended the 51st IFDT themed "Navigating Change in a Complex world: Innovation in Diplomatic Training" in Cuzco, Peru from 11-14 November, 2025 in which 77 participants took part from around the world. Dean(SSIFS) participated in a high level Panel Discussion on "What Do the 21st Century Diplomats Need to Know? Rethinking Diplomatic Education" in which he outlined how training institutions need to adapt their curricula in response to diplomacy's expanding & diversifying role in a rapidly changing world. The representatives of EU, Singapore, South Africa & United Kingdom were also a part of the Panel.







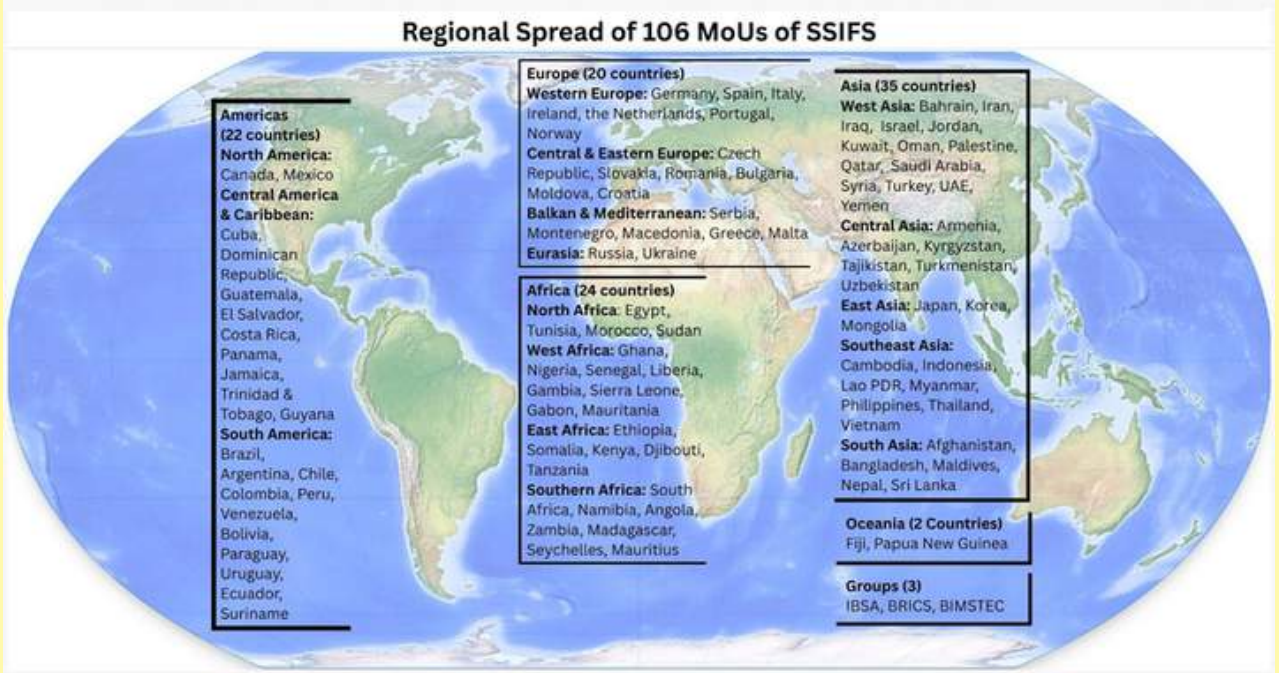


106th MoU for SSIFS with Israel

On 4th November, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Israeli Foreign Minister Mr. Gideon Saar met in New Delhi and had very productive discussions on strengthening our Strategic Partnership across various domains. They reaffirmed zero tolerance towards terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. and exchanged views on cooperation in multilateral fora. Later, they witnessed the exchange of an MoU on Training between SSIFS and the Israeli Foreign Ministry. This becomes the 106th MoU for SSIFS, starting from the first one signed in 1997 with Peru.







Diplomatic Training Institutes of India and Germany discuss ideas for cooperation

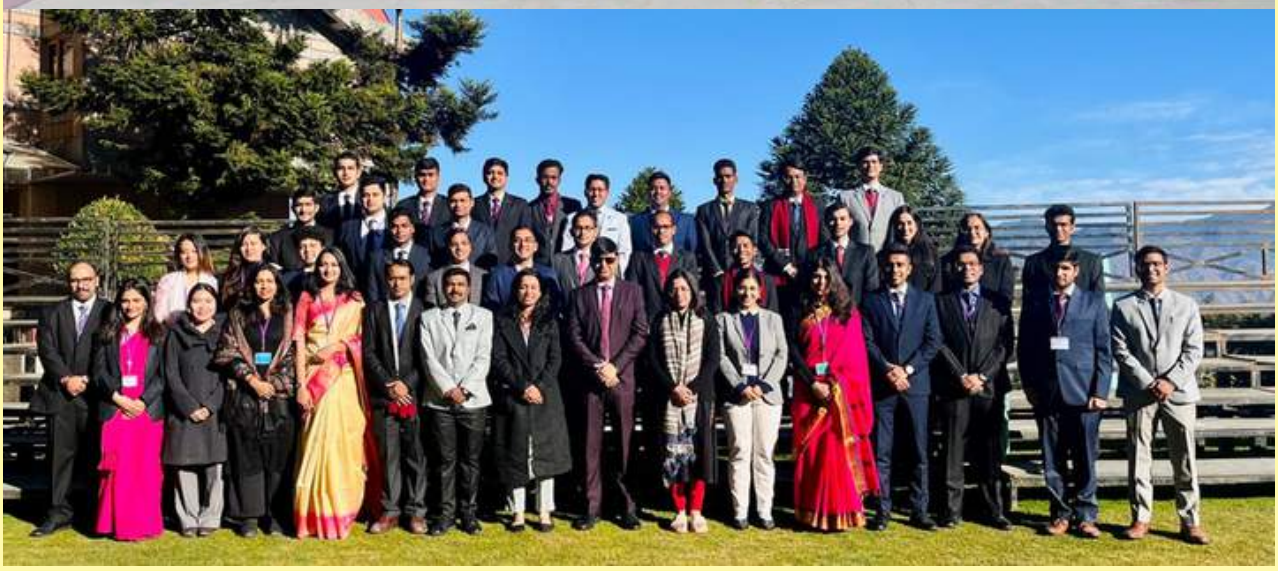
On 18th November, Dr. Peer Gebauer, Director-General for Central Services, Federal Foreign Office, Germany met Amb Raj Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS). They exchanged views on the diplomatic training and exchange programs being held at their respective institutions. They also shared ideas for upskilling diplomats with new technologies for smarter diplomacy.



Conference of Central Training Institutes

Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean(SSIFS), participated in the Conference of Central Training Institutes hosted by LBSNAA, on 26-27 Nov 2025, and highlighted the need for training becoming more compassionate and Mindset-Skillset oriented. The whole of nation approach to capacity building is taking shape with focus on vision of "Viksit Bharat". The Conference was held marking the conclusion of 100th Foundation Course of 2025 Batch Officer Trainees. Dean also held a good interaction with the IFS OTs at LBSNAA, who will subsequently begin their Professional Course at SSIFS from 1st December for nine months.





Panel Discussion on the book "The Other Side of Diplomacy"

Dean(SSIFS) moderated a panel discussion of 50 minutes with authors of "The Other Side of Diplomacy" at the India International Centre on 6 November. The role of spouses in Indian Diplomacy is often underplayed & uncelebrated and that's why this book an anthology of 16 lives from other side of diplomacy is so important.









Special Course on Functional Competencies for Smarter Diplomacy
(08-13 December 2025)

The fellowship program aims at equipping participants with 5Ps of Diplomacy namely- Political Diplomacy, Protocol in Diplomacy, Processes in Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy & Progressive learning for Diplomacy. The participants will also experience a 'cultural' immersion with visit to the places of historical significance in Delhi.

India has consistently worked to strengthen well-being and prosperity of the Indian Ocean community. SSIFS, the training arm of the Ministry of External Affairs, will be conducting a 'Special Course on Functional Competencies for Smarter Diplomacy' for officials from IORA region in line with GOI's vision MAHASAGAR, i.e., "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions."

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

Visits to 2 Institutions & Centres of Excellence in New Delhi to understand the priorities of IOR in the domains of maritime issues and disaster management

Understanding India through visits to heritage sites, enjoying its cuisines & culture



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 in January, Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) for two weeks in May, and Global South Young Diplomats Forum (GSYDF) Training Program for two weeks in September. Other months, SSIFS organises country, region, grouping, or themes-specific training programs of a maximum of two weeks, emanating from 105 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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