Volume 10 - October 2025

VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Thirty-one young Diplomats from Arab Republic of Egypt attended a ten days long training program at SSIFS from 08-17 October, 2025



Forty-five young Diplomats from 21 Countries of Central and South America and Caribbean Island Countries began their ten days long training program at SSIFS on 29 October 2025



FROM DEAN'S DESK



Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

We conducted a special training program for 31 young diplomats from Egypt in October 2025. This was a unique immersive program with a focus on developing ground-level understanding among future Ambassadors of a civilizational and friendly country that is growing with renewed momentum, and with which we have signed a strategic partnership in January 2023. The training program conducted during 08-17 October at SSIFS, had the happy coincidence of the visit of the Foreign Minister of Egypt to India on 16-17 October for the first India-Egypt Strategic Dialogue.

The Diplomats from Egypt showed their talent and keenness throughout the program and impressed the visiting faculty of the SSIFS with their engaging demeanour during knowledge and experiential sessions. One unique feature of this group was the complete gender parity, with 15 female diplomats giving tough competition to their 16 male colleagues in debates and table-top exercises.

The Egyptian diplomats were accompanied by Amb (Dr.) Yasser Elwy, who is the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and the director of both the Research and Assessment Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Director of the Diplomatic Institute. His visit allowed us to exchange ideas on strengthening our cooperation in Diplomatic capacity building and design activities in the coming year.

On 29 October, we began a new training program for our friends from Central and Latin American and Caribbean Island countries. One of the largest groups in one program, 45 diplomats from 21 countries and the CARICOM Secretariat, would bring our Global South partners closer to India, in understanding the opportunities for developing bilateral and regional partnerships, through the content of this specially curated training program. A weekend trip to Uttar Pradesh would give them a glimpse of the most populous and one of the fastest-growing states of India. Talent, Technology, Tourism, and Trade, they would witness all 4Ts of Economic Diplomacy in action in UP on 2-3 November. Later they also would get a chance to visit Taj Mahal.

In November, we have a special training program for diplomats from BIMSTEC countries, and an inaugural Cyber/AI Diplomacy 3-day module for MEA officers posted at headquarters. We keep innovating based on the changing demands of our times and reimagine our training repertoire accordingly - what we can call a nimble-footed capacity building mindset. We also look forward to receiving 50+ Officer Trainees of the 2025 batch to join SSIFS at the end of November for their 9-month-long Induction Training Program. With best wishes from the SSIFS Family.

Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
31 October 2025

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

2nd Special Course for Diplomats from the Arab Republic of Egypt [08-17 October, 2025]

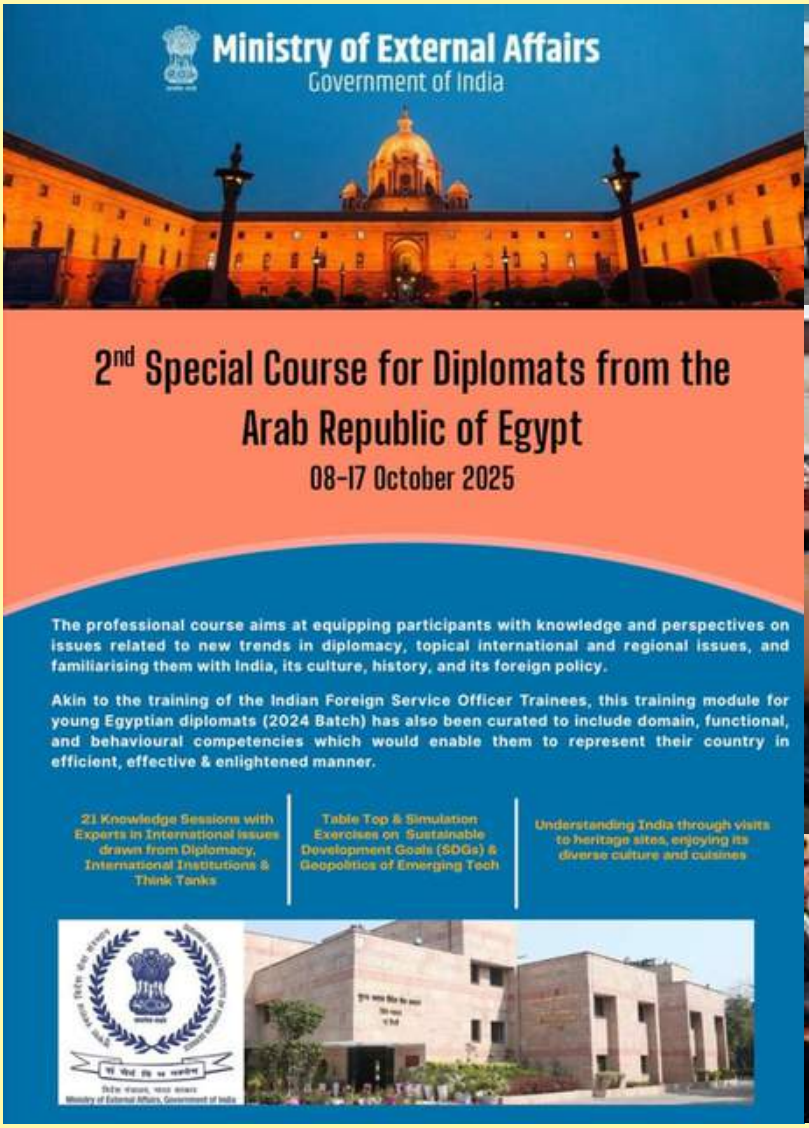
Inaugural Day & Welcome Dinner (08 October 2025)

The 2nd Special Course for Diplomats from the Arab Republic of Egypt was conducted at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 08-17 October 2025. 31 newly inducted diplomats from Egypt were led by Ambassador Dr. Yasser Elwy, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs & Director of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies of Egypt, to participate in the ten-day-long special course.

Dean (SSIFS), Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, inaugurated the Course in the presence of H.E. Mr. Kamel Galal, Ambassador of Egypt to India. 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.

The Special Course was designed akin to the training program of Indian Foreign Service Officer Trainees, where focus was to include domain, functional, and behavioural competencies which would enable the young diplomats to represent their country in a more efficient, effective & enlightened manner.

The first day ended with a ‘Welcome Dinner’ hosted by Dean (SSIFS) for the participants to provide a social gathering platform.











Knowledge Sessions for the 2nd Special Course for Diplomats from Egypt

The ten-day-long special course included 21 knowledge sessions on various aspects of diplomacy, such as Political Diplomacy, Digital & AI Diplomacy, Multilateral, Environmental, Economic, and Cultural Diplomacy, and a few sessions on Behavioural Competency.

There were 21 knowledge sessions and Table Top & Simulation Exercises conducted by experts and professionals drawn from diplomacy and prominent Institutions/think tanks. Some glimpses from the Knowledge Sessions are presented below:



2nd Special Course for Diplomats from Egypt
Study Visits to Prominent Institutions

Visits to three prominent Institutions were arranged for the diplomats from Arab Republic of Egypt to impart knowledge through experiential learning. The diplomats had a half-day attachment with the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), India's oldest & largest apex business organization, established in 1927. The diplomats had an opportunity to interact with FICCI officers and representatives from several business houses.

The 2nd visit was to the ANUBHUTI KENDRA, a state-of-the-art centre at Bharat Mandapam, where the diplomats were able to see mega infrastructure development projects using Virtual & Augmented Reality and were briefed about the Prime Minister's Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity. In addition to this, the diplomats visited the One District One Product display at the Bharat Mandapam and learned about the ODOP initiative to promote balanced regional development by selecting, branding, and promoting one or two products from each district in India.

The 3rd visit was to the Pradhanmantri Sanghralaya to gain an understanding of the Indian democratic system. The diplomats enjoyed the high-tech experiential displays detailing the contributions of all Prime Ministers of India to India's journey since Independence.



Understanding India through Cultural & Historical Explorations

Visits to Qutub Complex in New Delhi and Taj Mahal and an ODOP centre in Agra were included in the program to give the diplomats chance to visit these historical UNESCO World Heritage sites.

At Qutab Minar, the diplomats were given a guided tour of the Qutub Complex where ancient Indian temple architecture is morphed within Islamic architecture of Minars, as well as the remarkable Iron Pillar dated 375-415 CE from Emperor Chandragupta II of Gupta Dynasty.

All the diplomats enjoyed and deeply appreciated their visit to the Taj Mahal, for its beautiful facade, brilliant architecture, sheer scale and use of pietra dura (inlay work).

The diplomats also visited UP Government Handicrafts outlet where few products from the One District One Product theme were displayed.

The diplomats also visited the Dilli Haat in New Delhi and enjoyed the warm ambiance of an open-air market buzzing with the vibrant traditional and ethnic handicrafts and other items.







Lec-Dem on Indian Classical Dance and Music

Along with in-house sessions on various aspects of diplomacy, the diplomats also had an opportunity to learn about Indian classical dance and tradition during a Lecture cum Demonstration by Ms. Swati Sinha, a renowned Kathak performer from the Jaipur gharana and a disciple of Pandit Rajendra Gangani. This session was a collaborative effort between SSIFS and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and served as a powerful representation of India's rich classical heritage and historical syncretism.

Kathak, which literally means "storyteller," represents a unique blend of the bhakti tradition and the courtly elegance influenced by Rajput and Persian styles. It has evolved from temple narration to thrive in darbars (courts) and stands as a living symbol of intercultural exchange and assimilation. Ms. Sinha captivated the audience with her intricate footwork (tatkar), enhanced by ankle bells, and expressive mime (abhinaya). She emphasized the ancient tradition of Natyashastra, discussing the nava rasas (nine emotions) and hasta mudras (hand gestures) that convey universal human experiences such as love, devotion, humor, and conflict.

As an art form rooted in both performance and spiritual storytelling, the lecture-demonstration on Indian classical dance and tradition served as a powerful tool for fostering cultural connections and laying the groundwork for deeper diplomatic understanding between India and Egypt.









Final Day of the Course - Reflections through Presentations & Valedictory

Dean SSIFS conferred Valedictory certificates to the diplomats for completing the special course at SSIFS in the presence of Ambassador Yasser Elwy, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs & Director of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies of Egypt.

The participants made informative presentations on topics of relevance such as the Role of media and social platforms in shaping narratives, Food and energy security in global diplomacy, Connectivity to building resilient economies, and Cultural Diplomacy. The participants conveyed that the special course at SSIFS had added immense value to the training program that they are undergoing at their Diplomatic Academy and expressed deep gratitude to the Government of India for this special opportunity. Dean SSIFS extended the participants farewell wishes for their diplomatic careers.

Some Memories from the Valedictory Session



International Relations Students from Jindal Global University visited SSIFS on 15 October 2025 for a Session on Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

At the initiative of Ambassador Jitendra Nath Misra, who is a professor now at the Jindal Global University, 46 students of International Relations visited SSIFS on 15 October 2025 to understand the foreign policy and diplomacy of India in modern times and how India manages the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of international relations. They also got a glimpse of the training program and pedagogical model used at SSIFS for the training of our young diplomats. Dean(SSIFS) presented to them the guiding principles of Indian Foreign Policy, and the vision of Viksit Bharat and the role of Diplomacy in that vision. The very engaging interaction continued over working lunch, which showed that the youth of India are aware of the opportunities ahead for the country.



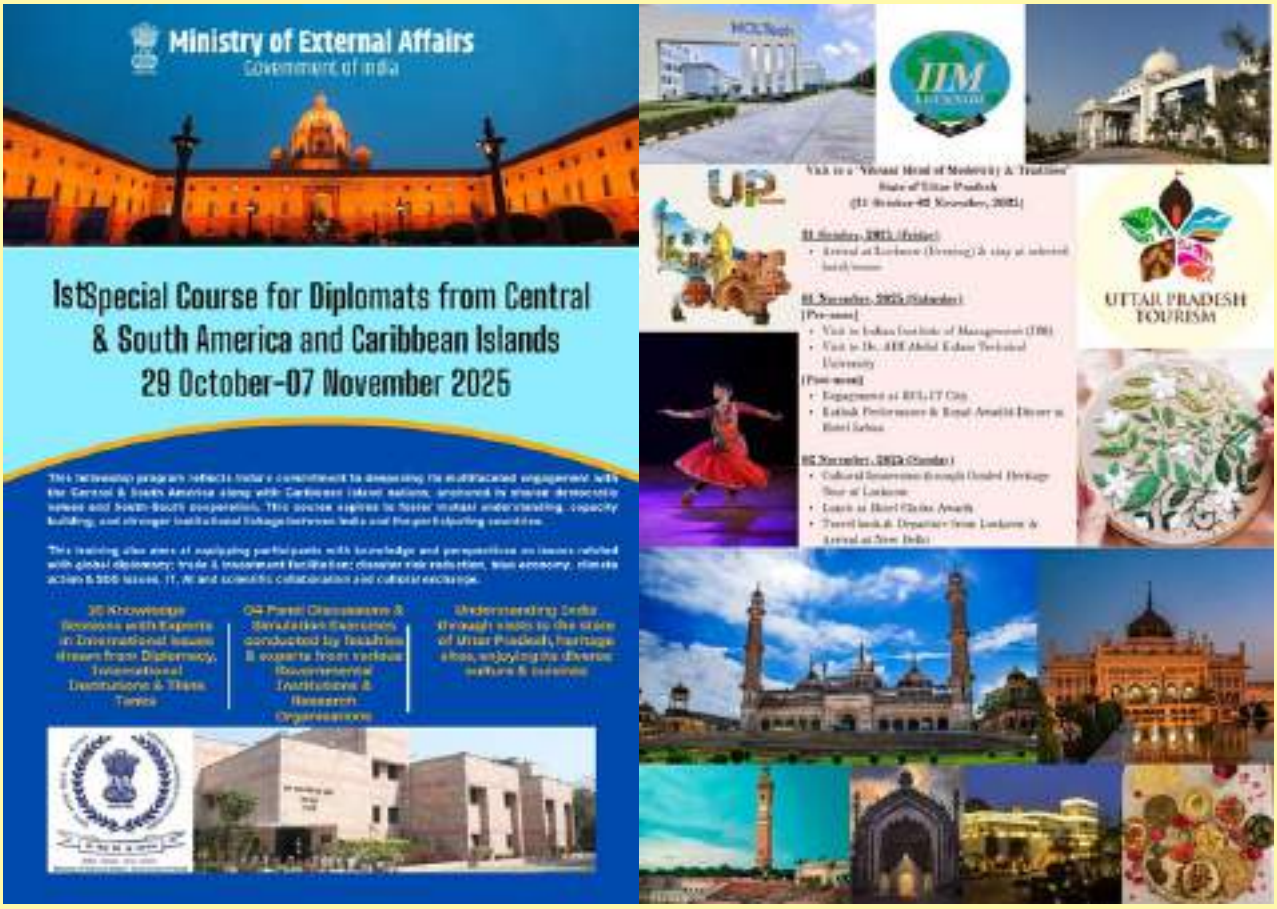


1st Special Course for Diplomats for Central & South America and Caribbean Islands
Inaugural Day & Welcome Dinner (29 October 2025)

The 1st Special Course for Diplomats for Central & South America and Caribbean Islands was inaugurated by Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean(SSIFS) at SSIFS. 45 diplomats from 21 countries & the CARICOM Secretariat are participating in the program.

In the inaugural session, Amb. Srivastava gave a brief overview of the Institute and it's competency-based training programs, discussed the "Theories of International Relations" and touched upon the concept of "Global South". He also elaborated on the pillars of India's foreign policy, India's Strategic Horizon, and the Core Dimensions of its Resilience.

The first day ended with a ‘Welcome Dinner’ hosted by Dean (SSIFS) for the participants and the resident Ambassadors of the Latin American region, to provide a social gathering platform.





1st Special Course for Diplomats for Central & South America and Caribbean Islands
Inaugural Day on Political & Public Diplomacy













Welcome Dinner (29 October 2025)
Attended by 45 Participants & Ambassadors in New Delhi of 9 Countries from the region - Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Suriname, & Venezuela



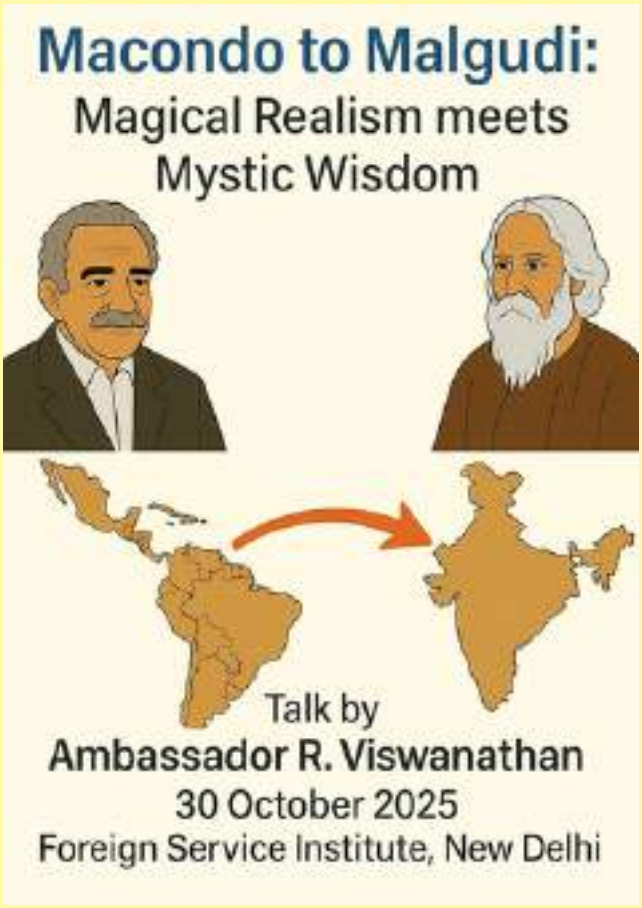




Knowledge Sessions on Day 2

A Special session by Amb R. Vishwanathan on India-Latin America Relations

Amb. R. Vishwanathan gave a passionate account of what connects India with the faraway land of Latin America, and what is transforming in this relationship. The session was engrossing for the program participants as they heard from probably the most knowledgeable person in India on Latin America, who had devoted his diplomatic career to the region and continued to pursue his connections, research, and passion for the region in the past decade post-retirement. The 60-minute address was followed by a 45-minute Q&A session, showing clearly the interest that Amb. Vishwanathan generated among the participants. The Session was also attended by Ambassador of Colombia in New Delhi.







Digital & AI Diplomacy





Swachh Bharat - A Mindset and Habit at SSIFS

Commemorating the 156th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean(SSIFS), planted trees in the SSIFS campus on 1st October 2025, and participated in a cleanliness drive, highlighting the importance of #SwachhBharat.
Dean also administered the Swachhata Pledge to the officers and officials of SSIFS and felicitated Safai-Mitras for their relentless efforts in keeping the campus green and clean.





External Affairs Minister extended IFS Day wishes on 9th October



Role of SSIFS in Bringing IFS Service together for sharing best practices, challenges & opportunies is visible in this post

EAM met with the IFS Officer Trainees of 2024 Batch and Two Trainee Diplomats from Bhutan on 3rd December 2024

EAM met with the MCTP I participants IFS Officers of 2013 and 2014 Batches on 14 May 2025



2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Countries (17-22 Nov 2025)

With 22% of the world population and a $5.2 trillion economy, BIMSTEC stands as a beacon of shared progress with 07 nations manifesting a single vision.

This fellowship programme aims at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on 07 pillars of BIMSTEC namely trade, investment, development; environment and climate change; people-to-people contacts; agriculture and food security; science, technology, innovation and connectivity.

India has consistently worked to strengthen well-being and prosperity in the BIMSTEC region. India will be assuming BIMSTEC chairship in April 2027. In run up to India's chairship, SSIFS, the training arm of the Ministry of External Affairs, will be conducting its 2nd Special Course for diplomats from BIMSTEC.

13 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 associated with BIMSTEC such as trade, investment, climate change issues, people-to-people contacts, connectivity and disaster management

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




Cyber Diplomacy Course
for MEA Officials
25,26 & 28 November 2025
About Program
SSIFS is organizing a Cyber & AI Diplomacy Training Program for upskilling for MEA officers at the Headquarters on 25, 26 & 28 November 2025
Program Outline
25 Nov (Tuesday)
26 Nov (Wednesday)
28 Nov (Friday)
Cyber Diplomacy & Negotiations Retrospect & Prospect
Cyber Regulation - Global & Indian Perspectives
Practical AI Tools for Diplomats
Deep- Tech
Digital Toolkit for Smarter Diplomacy
Data, Diplomacy & International Relations
Digital Influence - Narratives & Disinformation
Cyber Security Relevant to Diplomats
Geopolitics of Emerging Technologies & Hybrid Warfare
Digital Governance & Digital Public Infrastructure
SPEAKERS
• Ms. Dipakshi Mehandru (Director, Government Affairs, Intel Cooperation, India)
• Mr. Kazim Rizvi (Founding Director, The Dialogue)
• Dr. Preet Deep Singh (Vice President at Apna.Co, and formerly with Invest India, Start-Up India, ODOP etc.)
• Dr. Rakesh Maheshwari (Former Senior Director, MeitY)
• Lt. Gen. Rajesh Pant (Member, GAC, CyberPeace Foundation, and Former National Cyber Coordinator at PMO)
• Mr. Rajesh Ranjan (Lead of Core Government Affairs and Public Policy, Google India)
• Mr. Shailendra Vikram Singh, Director- National Security Governance at SAP, and Former Deputy Secretary (Cyber & Information Security), MHA
• Major Vineet Kumar (Founder & Global President, Cyber Peace Foundation)

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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