



VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

**Mid Career Training Program II for 2009 Batch of IFS
Officers conducted at SSIFS during 07-25 April 2025**



Call on External Affairs Minister on 9 April (above)

Call on Commerce & Industry Minister on 16 April (below)



FROM DEAN'S DESK

Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service conducts every year a Mid Career Training Program II (MCTP II) for Director level officers (15 years of service experience) who are due for promotion to the level of Joint Secretary, Grade III of Foreign Service. Foreign Secretary very succinctly put this important transition for IFS officers to be “from Success to Significance” when the Batch of 2009 called on him on the very first day of the three weeks long (7-25 April 2025) MCTP II on 7th April. JS posts, being the policy making



and implementation level platform, the training focused on both domain and functional expertise as well as behavioural competencies to equip the participants with required technical and psychometric toolkits enabling them to make smooth transition into their new role. As India itself is gearing on to a transformational journey towards Viksit Bharat, this transition to policy making level becomes still more significant. Participants were required to submit a paper on “Diplomatic Challenges and Opportunities in our journey towards Viksit Bharat” as part of this MCTP II. The forty-two papers which are published as a compendium “Diplomacy for Viksit Bharat”, truly shows the change in mindset in our officers towards empowering themselves with the umpteen opportunities that are present for Indian diplomacy, while remaining cognizant of the challenges too. In this newsletter we have included few contributions from our MCTP II participants in summary form, which we thought to be of interest to our larger readership. While reading through these submissions one gets a feeling that we have understood well, the contours of our journey ahead. We at SSIFS enjoyed curating a program which added value to these bright mid-career IFS officers, who in turn made the classrooms a platform for knowledge sharing and Samvad (Dialogue) which was mutually beneficial.

Our Officer Trainees of 2024 batch continued their desk attachments, shifting to their second desks in second half of the month to get diversified experience during this three months long on-job training. They also had three opportunities to continue their group learning in three events coordinated by SSIFS in this month - one, interaction with US diplomats currently working in US Embassy in Delhi on 3 April; two, attending the Global Technology Summit on 11 April; and three, a Cultural Diplomacy evening with famous choreographer Terence Lewis on 16 April.

On 28 April, we began the first special one-week long course for Indian Ocean Rim Countries' (IORA) Diplomats with focus on six priorities of IORA in the domains of maritime economy and security. On 29 April, we began a four-days orientation program for ten Defence Attaches designate who would be joining Indian Missions shortly. The program focuses on functional and domain competencies that the defence attaches are expected to demonstrate in their assignments in missions abroad. On 10 April, 105th MoU for SSIFS was signed with Republic of Slovakia during the visit of Hon'ble President of India to Bratislava.

In this newsletter we have included a letter of appreciation and gratitude received by SSIFS from its counterpart in Myanmar for the course that we conducted in March for Myanmar's young diplomats. The encouraging message empowers us that our efforts are paying rich dividends to our partners building bridges for stronger bilateral relationship.

With best wishes from SSIFS Family.



[Raj Kumar Srivastava]

New Delhi

30 April 2025

A Special Message from Myanmar on the course conducted at SSIFS in March 2025

The 2nd Special Course for Diplomats from Myanmar was held at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 17-27 March 2025. The two-weeks long training program was attended by 31 diplomats. The program was curated with clear focus on the needs of young diplomats - to understand functional as well domain knowledge. The sessions on leadership and emotional intelligence on one hand and on technology and digital diplomacy on the other provided a full spectrum skill based training which is the need of the hour for new age diplomacy where uncertainty is the only certain parameter. We are delighted at SSIFS to receive the following message from Strategic Studies and Training Department (SSTD) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“... We are particularly grateful for the well-structured curriculum, which provided our participants with invaluable insights through thought-provoking discussions and lectures delivered by distinguished speakers. The meticulously planned local excursions, most notably a trip to Bodh Gaya and study visits further enriched their experience, fostering cross-cultural understanding and creating lasting memories. The interactions between the young diplomats of Myanmar and India have laid a strong foundation for enduring friendship and mutual cooperation, which we are confident will yield fruitful outcomes in the years ahead...”



Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

First Special Course for Diplomats from Indian Ocean Rim Association Countries (28 April - 3 May 2025)

The First Special Course for 17 Diplomats from 16 IORA Countries began at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service on 28 April 2025. The week-long training program was inaugurated by the Minister of State for External Affairs and Textile, Shri Pabitra Margherita. He extended warm greetings to all participants and wished them a pleasant and productive stay in India and expressed hope that IORA continues would serve as a platform that brings like-minded countries closer across the Indian Ocean, fostering collective efforts toward **Mutual And Holistic Advancement for Security And Growth Across the 'Hind MAHASAGAR' Region.**

The Special Course is designed focusing on six priorities of IORA in the domain of Maritime Economy, Security, Ecology, Academic & S&T Cooperation, Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief. The flyer of the course on next page ahs more details.





Ministry of External Affairs

Government of India



1st Special Course for Diplomats from IORA Member Countries 28 April-03 May 2025

The special course aims at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on issues related to maritime security; trade & investment facilitation; fisheries management; disaster risk reduction; academic and scientific cooperation; blue economy, and tourism promotion & cultural exchanges in the IORA region. As the current Vice-chair of IORA, 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 its 1st Special Course for diplomats from IORA countries in line with GOI's vision MAHASAGAR, i.e., "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions."

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

Visits to 4 Institutions & Centres of Excellence in New Delhi to understand the priorities of IORA such as fisheries management, academic and scientific cooperation, disaster risk reduction

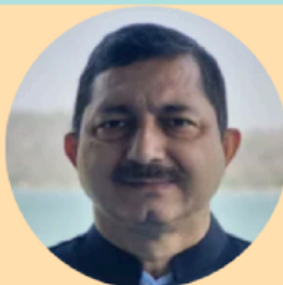
Understanding India through visits to Heritage sites, enjoying its cuisines & culture





1st Special Course for Diplomats from IORA Member Countries (28 April-03 May 2025)

	28 April (Mon)	29 April (Tues)	30 April (Wed)	01 May (Thurs)	02 May (Fri)	03 May (Sat)
0930-1100	Group Photo Welcome remarks by Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava Dean, SSIFS Opening remarks by Amb Sanjiv Ranjan SG, IORA Address by Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles Shri Pabitra Margherita	Visit to Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) Fisheries Management Dr. George John RIS	Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief Col Nadeem Arshad (Retd.) Sr Consultant Operations NDMA (0915-1015 Hrs)	Maritime Security Paradigm in the IOR Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan DG, National Maritime Foundation	Cyber Threats and Defensive Strategies in Maritime Domain Major Vineet Kumar USI-CyberPeace Center of Excellence	One day visit to Agra
	IORA: Retrospect & Prospects Amb Sanjiv Ranjan SG, IORA	Academic & Scientific Cooperation Dr. Ravi Srinivas Consultant, RIS & Dr. Amit Kumar Assistant Professor, RIS	Visit to ISA (1130-1330 Hrs)	Search & Rescue Operations in Maritime Domain Commandant Neeraj Sharma National Maritime Foundation	AI & Responsible Frameworks Prof. (Dr.) Manish Prateek Professor & Pro Vice-Chancellor, DBS Global University	
	India's Development Partnership Shri P Kumaran Secretary (East)	Six Priorities of IORA - Experiential Learning Sessions			Thematic Presentations (based on six priorities of IORA)	
	Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Region- Pathways Ahead Prof. Vishva Nath Attri Director, ICIPS, Kurukshetra University Dean's Dinner from 1900 hrs onwards at Eros Hotel	Cdr (Dr.) Arnab Das Maritime Research Centre, Pune	Visit to IFC-IOR (1500-1700 Hrs)	Visit to CDRI (1430-1730 Hrs)	Valedictory Ceremony	
1115-1245						
1330-1500						
1515-1645						



RIS

Research and Information System
for Developing Countries

विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



INTERNATIONAL
SOLAR
ALLIANCE

CDRI

Coalition for
Disaster
Resilient
Infrastructure (CDRI)



Orientation Program for Defence Attaches Designate

A Four-days orientation program began at SSIFS for ten Defence Attaches designate focusing on the essential knowledge that they need to become effective members of our Missions' team. The sessions include International Relations theories, Chanakya's thoughts on Statecraft and Diplomacy, and Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy. Practical knowledge related to administration, finance, protocol, consular, crisis management and security consciousness relevant to working in missions abroad are covered as well. The experts on specific partnerships and challenges in our foreign relationships would also speak to DAS designate in the program.



Left to Right - Capt Modit Soni, Col Mohd Raza Israil, Capt CHV Sudhakar, Cmde (WHA) Amit Sood, Air Cmde M Rangachari VM, Shri Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS), Cmde MB Dongre, Brig Amit Sharma, Capt Arjit Pande, Capt Ashish Delsaria, Sqn Ldr Kunwar Lauren.



Mid Career Training Program II for 2009 Batch of IFS Officers conducted at SSIFS during 07-25 April 2025

MCTP II for overall 42 officers was conducted in three weeks duration in which 13 working days schedule was programmed, including 5 days at seven different states - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab, and Tamilnadu. The program started with a short session with Foreign Secretary in South Block, where he highlighted the key focus areas of training program and suggested to the officers to use this period to come out with specific recommendations for the Ministry.

In eight days in Delhi, the participants had one full day at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry at Vanija Bhawan, including a call on Commerce & Industry Minister. The participants spent a full day on April 12th at the Global Technology Summit.

The six days program at SSIFS included 12 sessions on key foreign policy priorities with division heads at the Ministry, which included Neighborhood First, Strategic Partnerships, and Key Challenges. Six sessions with former Indian Ambassadors focussed on Public Diplomacy in the age of social media and AI, Multilateral Diplomacy in three different dimensions - Political, Trade, and Climate Action, and Tech & Defence partnerships with US, France, and Russia.

There were four sessions on negotiations, critical thinking, and collaborative leadership as well focusing on behavioural competencies.

On 9th April MCTP II participants called on EAM where they had the opportunity to take his guidance on multiple themes over 45 minutes period, the summary of which is provided at page 11 of this newsletter.



Glimpses from the States Attachment of the MCTP II Participants Focus on Tradition (Culture), Technology, Trade, Tourism, & Talent (Skill Development & Mobility)



Ten officers of the Indian Foreign Service of 2009 Batch, paid a courtesy visit to Governor on 23 April and on Chief Minister in Lucknow on 24 April.



Six IFS officers, MCTP II participants, having state attachment in Bihar called on the Governor on 21 April and on the Chief Minister on 25 April



Visit to Aspirational District Chandauli in Uttar Pradesh by MCTP II participants.



State Attachment in Tamilnadu



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officials; Called for action to establish Punjab as a prime investment destination



Collaborative dialogue between IFS officers (2009 Batch) and university representatives of the State of Punjab, exploring opportunities for academic and diplomatic advancements) with the State of Punjab on 23rd April, 2025.

Selected Quotes by MCTP II participants from the Publication “Diplomacy for Viksit Bharat”

“India’s journey towards becoming a Viksit Bharat is as much a diplomatic endeavor as it is a developmental one. This journey would be both promising and challenging. While socio-economic inequality remains a major internal barrier, diplomacy offers tools to overcome external challenges, access global opportunities, and shape the journey toward a Viksit Bharat. The global landscape offers immense potential for strategic partnerships in trade, technology, energy, education, skill development, and sustainability. By rising to its diplomatic challenges and capitalizing on its opportunities, India can craft a new global narrative rooted in inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience. The road ahead may be complex, but with visionary leadership and enhanced strategic engagement, India’s aspiration for a Viksit Bharat can well become a reality as well as a beacon for the developing world.”



**Sushil
Kumar**
CG
Melbourne

“Diplomatic Opportunities:

1. **Global Leadership Role:** India as a potential top-tier global power (G3 or G5) gives diplomats leverage in setting global agendas on trade, security, climate change, and technology.
2. **Strategic Partnerships & South-South Cooperation**
3. **Economic Diplomacy:** With India aiming to become a USD 40+ trillion economy, diplomats can push for greater market access for Indian businesses. Indian diplomats will have opportunities to scout for Investment in cutting-edge sectors like AI, quantum tech, green hydrogen, and space tech; as well as investment & acquisition possibilities for Indian companies looking to go and expand their footprint abroad. It will also be important to promote Indian startups and innovation globally.
4. **Soft Power Projection:** As India’s stature grows globally, there will be greater avenues for expanding India’s influence through culture, yoga, Ayurveda, cinema, and education. Viksit Bharat will also create opportunities for promoting Indian thought leadership in global ethics, pluralism, and democracy.
5. **Diaspora Engagement:** With Viksit Bharat, the Indian diaspora too will likely grow in stature, offering bridges for diplomacy, business, and soft power.
6. **Leadership in Global South”**



**Aniket
Govind
Madavgane**
Director
MEA

“Elaborate consultation with all stakeholders to identify technology needs for achieving ‘Viksit Bharat’, across critical sectors as listed below:

- **Digital Transformation:** Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Quantum Computing, Advanced Communication Technologies-6G and beyond, Cybersecurity.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** Semiconductors, Advanced Robotics, New Materials Science, Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Electric Vehicle Technologies and Battery Storage.
- **Sustainable Development Technologies:** Renewable Energy (Solar, Wind, Green Hydrogen), Climate Change Mitigation, Sustainable Agriculture, Water Management, Waste-to-Energy.
- **Space Technologies, Advanced Defence Systems, Healthcare & Life Sciences:** Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices.”



**Amit Kumar
Mishra**
Director
MEA

“India’s DPI represents a unique convergence of innovation, governance, and scale. As the world looks for models that are inclusive, scalable, and values-driven, India can offer DPI as its strategic contribution to global development. By integrating DPI into its foreign policy and economic diplomacy, India can foster long-term partnerships, secure new markets, and build a powerful digital brand. DPI is not just infrastructure — it is a platform for 21st-century diplomacy, growth, and global leadership. Digital infrastructure is as crucial as building physical infrastructure abroad, and perhaps may overtake such goals in the near future, especially in the Global South. As we extend DPI Diplomacy, equipping our teams abroad will go a long way in projecting India as a tech leader as well as in institutionalising DPI in Multilateral Diplomacy.”



**Ruby
Jaspreet**
CG
Cape Town

“Our diplomats would have to skilfully use the tools of trade, technology and investments in their diplomatic toolkit, always keeping their eyes on the ultimate objective of the country’s accelerated development. In this journey, they would need to negotiate and overcome the challenges of domestic regulatory barriers, state bureaucracies, slow-decision making and gaps in infrastructure. Balancing the requirements of foreign partners along with navigating ground-realities is not an easy task but this is where the role of diplomacy comes into play. As has been oft repeated by our leadership, there is enormous work that needs to be undertaken in a mission mode and business as usual will simply not do. To realise our dream to make India a ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047, we would have to change the way we do business.”



**Pooja
Tillu**
DHC
HCI Singapore



Forty five minutes with External Affairs Minister

A Session of Mantra-shakti for New Transformative Mindset



Mid Career Training Program-II - 2009 Batch of Indian Foreign Service

09 April 2025 : 1600-1645 hrs
Committee Room, JNB

Diplomacy in the Journey of Viksit Bharat



India's rise would provide resources and platforms for thinking big and building on those to achieve transformative outcomes. This would require a new mindset different than incremental one. India would need ideas, finance would not be a constraint. The message is clear - Think Big & Execute the plans efficiently & effectively.



Neighbourhood First

Our focus on being first port of call during crisis in our neighbourhood would need continued attention. Fast response in recent Myanmar earthquake is an example. Regular engagements, expeditious execution of projects that benefit people, and building sustainable partnerships in diverse areas would be the priority.



Public Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy would be increasingly about how effectively we meet our citizens' expectations. Public face aspects of our diplomacy would need higher degree of sensitivity and responsibility.



Key Analytical Perspectives

- Internal Accountability may define External Choices.
- Foreign Policy choices become constrained if you start getting involved in Internal Politics of a nation.
- How good is your Long-term Memory may provide you better analysis of Current Ground Reality.
- Having Realistic Expectations would allow Formulation of Executable Policy.

Dr. Jaishankar spoke about the changed times both externally as well as internally for India in which nature of Diplomacy has also changed demanding new outlook from Diplomats who would be leading the path of Viksit Bharat Journey

Qualities of Diplomats of Viksit Bharat Vision

Ability to distinguish between Trends & Events

Calmness & Focus in Uncertainty & Instability as they are now norms

Mindset to Think Big, Execute Well, & Not feel Finance Constrained

Citizen centric approach in policy formulation

Focus on continuous improvement to achieve the long term objectives



Mid Career Training Programme II (7-25 April 2025)

DIPLOMACY FOR VIKSIT BHARAT



An Evening of Cultural Diplomacy with Terence Lewis Presenting Indian Tradition in Innovative Ways

The IFS OTs of 2024 Batch had an interaction with one of India's leading choreographers & dancers, Mr Terence Lewis, as part of a Cultural Diplomacy Session at SSIFS in the evening of 16th April.

Credited for developing a new style of "Indo-Contemporary" fusion dance, Mr Lewis impressed upon the fact that it is important for artists to present Indian traditions in innovative ways so that 'dance' becomes an effective medium of connect with the people.

Dean Amb. Raj Srivastava fondly recollected the exhilarating performance of Terence's troupe in Croatia called the "Indradhanush" (Rainbow) and told the OTs that as diplomats they have a big role in showcasing the best traditions of India before the world. Terence explained how there is a need to pitch the Indian cultural treasures in the medium and language of the audience to make a lasting impact. Tradition and Technology could be synergised to showcase India as a rich and progressive cultural brand. His troupe's first outing as ICCR empanelled group to Slovenia and Croatia during February 2022 was a great experience of bringing the positive mindset to the audience in Europe that there would be a normal life on the other side of the Covid 19 pandemic. Terence also spoke about inspiration from yoga to his dance routines, in terms of controlling the breath.



An Informal Interaction with Junior Diplomats From the US Embassy in New Delhi : Understanding Processes & Priorities

On 3 April, SSIFS hosted a special 90 minutes informal interaction for the IFS Officer Trainees of 2024 batch with the Junior Diplomats currently working in different sections of the US Embassy in New Delhi. The idea originated from the US Embassy and Ministry of External Affairs, which aimed at creating networks among diplomats, understanding diverse processes in diplomatic work-field, and grasping the similarities and differences in priorities of two countries as understood by young diplomats. The candid discussions highlighted the confidence and comfort level among diplomats of two strategic partners who could share perspectives and ideas. Indian OTs shared their learning experiences at SSIFS in past few months while US diplomats shared the rich experience they get working in Delhi on a partnership which is so content rich.





72nd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats

1

Criteria for Nomination

- A minimum three years of diplomatic experience
- Proficiency in English Language
- Age below 40 years
- Preferably located in their Headquarters (not abroad)
- Have not attended a course in SSIFS in past 2 years
- Preferably a Foreign Service Officer, otherwise officers in other prominent government ministries having work profile with external relations focus

2

Course Information

- Ideal Group Size: 35-40
- Duration of Course: **19-30 May 2025** (Excl travel time)
- Working Language: English

3

Government of India Support

- Economy Class International Return Airfare
- Full Board & Accommodation
- Travel within India
- Per Diem is not admissible

4

Knowledge Sessions

- **Political Diplomacy:** Global Geopolitics & Geoeconomic Landscapes; Geopolitics of Emerging Technologies
- **Economic Diplomacy:** Diplomacy for Development through 3Ts: Trade, Tourism & Technology; Connectivity as a Force Multiplier
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Strengthening people to people ties through culture; Cultural Evening at SSIFS Auditorium
- **Public Diplomacy:** Communication Skills; Public Diplomacy in the age of Social Media & AI
- **Defence & Security Diplomacy:** Understanding different dimensions of security for enhancing peace & stability
- **Multilateral Diplomacy:** Global Governance- Challenges & Opportunities; Regulatory Frameworks for AI

5

Experiential Learnings through Visits

Sites in National Capital Region

- Prime Minister's Museum (Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya)
- New Parliament premises of India
- ISA
- CDRI

Visit to GIFT City: A world-class Global Finance & IT Hub in Gandhinagar, Gujarat

- International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)
- Fintech Ecosystem at GIFT City
- Experiential journey through India's cuisines in the capital of Gujarat

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

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. The Institute is located at Baba Gangnath Marg, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi.

SSIFS is headed by the Dean, a senior Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of External Affairs. The current Dean is Shri Raj Kumar Srivastava. SSIFS has an extensive pool of guest faculty drawn from experts in the field of academics and research, media, public life, industry and trade, senior serving and retired diplomats and other government officials.



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