Volume 7 - July 2025

VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

First Special Course for 41 Diplomats from 7 Countries in Central & West Africa was organised at SSIFS during 16-25 July 2025



Special Economic Diplomacy Module for IRS (C&IT) OTs of 2023 Batch from NACIN at SSIFS on 14-18 July 2025





FROM DEAN'S DESK



Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

The month of July 2025 for SSIFS was special as we established new partnerships with many capacity building institutions with specific programs. The institutions included:

- Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gandhinagar, where our IFS OTs spent three days for a custom-made Security Training Module.
- National Academy of Customs and Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN), from where 83 IRS (C&IT) OTs of 2023 batch visited SSIFS for a week long module on Economic Diplomacy.
- Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun, where SSIFS conducted a two day special Foreign Policy and Environmental Diplomacy Module for Indian Forest Service OTs of 2023 batch.

As we participated in the launch ceremony of the National Standards for CSTIs 2.0, our multiple cooperation above highlighted that "whole of nation approach" to capacity building is becoming visible increasingly in our journey towards "Viksit Bharat".

Our IFS OTs of 2024 batch continued their eighth and penultimate month of Induction Training Program at SSIFS, which focused on Defence and Security Diplomacy including Air Force and Army Attachments. The intense schedule included table-top exercises with reputed think-tanks and security experts and mentors, and a day each at National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and Ministry of Defence (MoD).

SSIFS conducted the first Special Course for 41 Diplomats from seven countries of Central & West Africa (Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Republic of Guinea), with the spirit of Global South, between 16-25 July 2025. Program was curated keeping in mind the needs of these countries and therefore included sessions and visits connected to development partnership initiatives, mineral, food, health and water security, trade negotiations, disaster management, cyber diplomacy, and maritime connectivity and security. Functional skills in digital technology, communications, and negotiations were covered in experiential workshops. Public and Cultural Diplomacy was given one full day in the program. The program was diverse and exhaustive, yet focused and learning oriented. It also created a network among seven countries' diplomats and India, and a common understanding on opportunities ahead for Global South countries as they work together.

SSIFS continues to strengthen its technological capabilities, and in that context we have developed in-house short story-telling videos on SSIFS and Diplomatic Training challenges and opportunities going forward, which are now available on SSIFS website. We have also placed on our website this month a list of our visiting faculty, which includes eminent scholars in diplomacy and foreign policy, entrepreneurs, policy makers, technology experts, and resource persons in the area of behavioural skills and Indian Knowledge System. August month would see IFS OTs of 2024 batch completing their training with us and 2000-01 batches joining us for their three-week-long MCTP III. There is never a dull moment at SSIFS. With best Wishes to our readers from SSIFS Family.

Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
31 July 2025

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

First Special Course for Diplomats from Central & West African (C&WA) Countries

The 1st Special Course for Diplomats from Central & West African Countries was held at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 16-25 July 2025. 41 mid-career diplomats from Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Republic of Guinea attended the 10 days long Special Course. Dean (SSIFS), Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava, inaugurated the Course. In his session on 'Guiding Principles of India's Foreign Policy' Dean highlighted the competency based training (behavioral, functional & domain) methodology of the Institute. He discussed the 'Theories of International Relations' and their applicability and elaborated on the pillars of the Indian Foreign Policy. Dean called the African continent the 'continent of the future' and emphasized that India attaches high priority to its relations with the continent.

The special course was tailored to include 20 knowledge sessions, Table Top & Simulation Exercises with experts in International issues drawn from diplomacy, prominent Institutions & Think Tanks and off-site visits aiming at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on various themes related to diplomacy, topical international and regional issues and familiarising them with India, and its culture. Some glimpses from the Knowledge Sessions are presented below :

Indian Foreign Policy



IR Theory



International Law



India-C&W Africa Relations



Cultural Diplomacy



Cyber Diplomacy



Digital Toolkit for Diplomacy



Critical Minerals



Development Partnership



Maritime Security



Health Security



Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure



Digital Public Infrastructure



Responsible AI for All



Multilateral Diplomacy Simulation



Some Glimpses from the C & W African Diplomats' visits within Delhi

On the second day of the program, Dean (SSIFS) hosted a dinner for the participants to provide a social gathering platform for developing long-lasting friendships.






As part of study visits, the diplomats visited National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), Anubhuti Kendra (to understand PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi Modal Connectivity), Pradhanmantri Sanghralaya & Gandhi Smriti.











Final Day of the Course - Reflections through Presentations & Valedictory

Dean (SSIFS) conferred Valedictory certificates to 41 diplomats at the Special Combined Course for countries from Central & West Africa for successfully completing their training at SSIFS on 25 July 2025.

The participants made informative country presentations on topics of relevance such as Sustainable Mining, Governance & Reforms, Cooperation with India and the Role of Diplomacy in the Implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP).

Amb Srivastava reiterated that knowledge & information sharing strengthen India's linkages with countries overtime. He extended the participants farewell wishes for their future diplomatic endeavours. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of India for the training program which was diversified and experiential.












Some Special Emotional Moments from the final session of the Program








Cultural Diplomacy Day for C&W African Countries' Diplomats

A lecture cum demonstration session was conducted by acclaimed Bharatnatyam exponent Ms Priya Venkatraman and her students at SSIFS on 24 July 2025 for the diplomats from Central & West Africa. She was welcomed by Joint Secretary Smt Anita Shukla. She spoke about the history & evolution of this oldest Classical dance form of India and demonstrated the key elements of Bharatnatyam involving Nritta (pure dance), Nritya (expressive dance) & Natya (dramatic elements).



82nd Know India Program participants attended the half day program at SSIFS

SSIFS conducted an orientation programme for 37 young Indian Diaspora visitors from 14 countries in the 82nd edition of the KIP on 23 July 2025, who witnessed a whole spectrum of Bharat's uniqueness-from Ancient Wisdom to Future Vision. Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava & Dr Preet Deep Singh made insightful presentations titled "Bharat - The Land of Knowledge) on its Journey towards Viksit Bharat" & "Know India & AI" respectively for these incoming young PIOs.



Induction Training Program for IFS OTs (2024 Batch) - Defence & Security Module

Experiential Learning Opportunities through Simulation Exercises

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) conducted two strategic gaming exercises in July 2025 to build the geopolitical comprehension, crisis response, and strategic thinking abilities of Indian Foreign Service Officer Trainees (2024 Batch). These simulations were designed to expose trainees to high-stakes international scenarios, combining multilateral complexity and national security contingencies.

The first simulation, conducted in collaboration with the Delhi Policy Group (DPG), was a multilateral geopolitical exercise intended to sharpen the participants' understanding of competing global power interests in an evolving world order. The exercise was built around a comprehensive and detailed narrative that projected global developments in 2025.

The scenario explored overlapping geopolitical disruptions—trade wars, technological decoupling, climate-related stresses, proxy wars, and the weakening of long-standing alliances. Participants assessed the shifting alignments among major powers and the expanding footprint of middle powers and coalitions. The DPG simulation offered a macro-level overview, encouraging participants to evaluate the implications for India's diplomacy, economic positioning, and its leadership role in the Global South. While immersive, this exercise was primarily narrative-based, and did not involve structured syndicates or live mentor interactions. It served as a thought-provoking precursor to the more intensive and structured exercise held by the United Service Institution (USI) of India at SSIFS, a week later.

The Strategic gaming exercise, the Kootneeti was organised by the United Service Institution (USI) at SSIFS and served as the capstone simulation for the Officer Trainees. This comprehensive, multi-day tabletop exercise featured a high degree of interactivity, structured syndicate work, and guided mentorship. It simulated a world in strategic flux, with rising multipolarity, weakened multilateral norms, and intensifying strategic competition among great powers. The exercise was designed to expose participants to the interplay of global power dynamics, India's national security challenges, and the strategic dilemmas of middle powers in a contested environment.

Nine syndicates were formed, each composed of Officer Trainees representing major powers or regional blocs and India. Each syndicate worked under the guidance of expert mentors from policy, military, and diplomatic domains, who provided real-time inputs, challenged assumptions, and deepened analytical rigour. The mentors included Amb Arun K Singh, Air Marshal S K Ghotia (Retd) , Amb Anil K Trigunayat, Amb Ashok K Kantha, Amb TCA Raghavan, Maj Gen RS Yadav (Retd), Maj Gen B K Sharma (Retd), Lt Gen P C Nair (Retd) and Vice Admiral A K Chawla (Retd). Officer Trainees were tasked with developing assessments as a team and crafting national strategies based on evolving developments presented to them during the course of the simulation.

The USI exercise focused on strategic scenario-building, crisis forecasting, and policy formulation. The scenario included a multifront challenge, compounded by shifting alliances, technological disruption, hybrid warfare tactics, and global institutional paralysis.

Syndicates had to respond as their respective syndicate and formulate India's diplomatic, military, economic, and strategic communications responses, factoring in India's aspirations for strategic autonomy and leadership in the Global South. They were required to prepare and deliver presentations on India's national objectives, threat assessments, external and internal security priorities, and proposed lines of effort to secure a stable, self-reliant, and influential regional and global posture. The sessions included real-time injects to simulate the evolving nature of geopolitical crises, requiring quick reassessments and agile strategy realignment.

The exercise also encouraged syndicates to identify friends, competitors, adversaries, and neutrals based on scenario progression and to recommend external balancing strategies through enhanced regional engagement and global partnerships. Presentations made by the syndicates reflected a nuanced grasp of the complexities of global affairs, and the critical importance of preserving India's strategic space in a volatile and unpredictable world. The mentor-facilitated interactions helped trainees simulate high-level policy environments and decision-making processes in the Ministry of External Affairs and other strategic institutions.

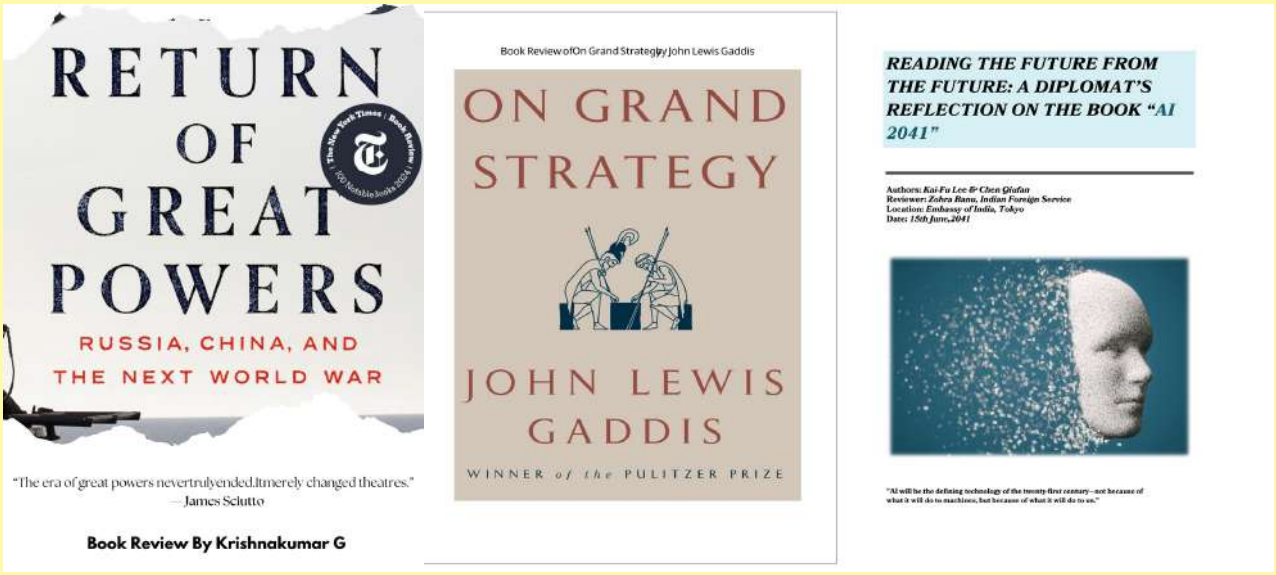
Some Memories from the Strategic Gaming Exercise - the Kootneeti - organised by the United Service Institution (USI) at SSIFS on 14-15 July 2025



Third Book Club Activity for IFS OTs on 18 July 2025

The third Book Club day was made a book reviews only activity. OTs showed that they have been reading quality books critically with keen learning mindset. The book reviews showed the depth of their understanding and evolution in their critical thinking and strategic analysis capabilites. Here are few examples of what we received as submissions by OTs on our Learning Management System.







Some Glimpses from the Army Attachment of IFS OTs during 21-25 July

Northern Command:

The five-day attachment with the Northern Command offered an immersive understanding of the Indian Army's operational, technological, and humanitarian roles in the Kashmir Valley. Beginning in Srinagar with the Air Defence Brigade and JAKLI, and moving on to forward posts at Naugam and Taj, the OTs witnessed live artillery drills and engaged with soldiers stationed at the Line of Control. Briefings by senior officers on Operation Sindoor, information warfare broadened their understanding of modern conflict dynamics. The stay at Sialkot without basic amenities like running water was a humbling reminder of the hardships endured by our soldiers. What stood out profoundly was the Army's developmental outreach through goodwill schools and civil-military synergy. For OTs as future diplomats, this experience underscored that national security is not the sole responsibility of any single institution; it requires a seamless blend of defence preparedness, strategic communication, and civilian cooperation. The Northern Command attachment reaffirmed the imperative of a whole-of-nation approach and highlighted how diplomacy and defence must work hand-in-hand to ensure India's unity, stability, and progress.









Eastern Command:

The eastern Himalayan state of Sikkim is known for its challenging terrain, natural beauty and significant geopolitical influence. Proximity to the crucial Siliguri Corridor and bordering the states of Nepal, Bhutan and China, makes Sikkim a key part of India's Defence and Security Architecture. As part of their Army Attachment, IFS OTs visited key military formations in Siliguri, in Gangtok, and in Kalimpong. Additionally, they visited crucial army posts at Nathu La, Doka La, and Cho La, and engaged with specialized units. This attachment offered deep insights into Sikkim's geography, military ethos, rank structure, and newer horizons of security and defense policy. Living and interacting with jawans enhanced their understanding of everyday challenges, border management, national security, and civil-military fusion.







A Short Report of the Air Force Attachment of IFS OTs during 09-11 July

IFS OTs of 2024 batch embarked on an intensive Air Force attachment from 09-11 July to deepen their understanding of national security and strategic operations. The visit allowed them to witness the operational nerve centers of the Indian Air Force at Ambala and Chandigarh stations. The attachment commenced at the premier fighter base in Ambala, where students observed the formidable Dassault Rafale and Jaguar aircraft in action. Detailed briefings on the critical role of the base during Operation Sindoor further enriched their understanding. The tour then proceeded to the Chandigarh Air Force Station, a vital hub for transport and helicopter operations. Officer Trainees were briefed on the strategic utility of carrier aircraft like the C-17 Globemaster III and the IL-76. They also observed a live demonstration of the Chinook helicopter's rapid cargo loading capabilities. The experience culminated in a profound appreciation for the discipline, teamwork, and unwavering dedication of the Air Warriors, who safeguard our skies. This real-world context reinforced the theoretical concepts of national security,

Some Quotes from OTs on "Sashakt Bharat" inspired from the Security Module which shows the Behavioural Competencies getting ingrained in them

CONFIDENCE

A BUDDING DIPLOMAT'S RESOLUTION

Shanti and Shakti go hand in hand. In pursuing the end of Shanti which comes naturally to Indians, I will not forget the importance of Shakti be it military, information, economic, or technology. When I will sit in an office on the heights of Swiss Alps in Geneva thinking of global peace, I will not forget the hardships that the Jawan faces at the heights of the Himalayas to enforce that peace. When I will wield the pen, I will not forget how it will impact the (wo)man with the gun. Most of all, I will not forget that a Viksit Bharat is possible only through a Sashakt Bharat.



G Harishankar

COMMITMENT

The journey towards Sashakt Bharat demands a holistic application of military strength, diplomatic wisdom, technological innovation, and civil-military synergy. Each facet must reinforce each other, enabling India to navigate the uncertain world while safeguarding sovereignty and prosperity. Kautilya's Arthashastra concisely captures this truth in the following verse:

"चातुर्विधं शक्तिमप्रमेयं राज्ञः साधनम्। मन्त्रः सैन्यं आर्थिकं च, इति प्रभवं प्रयोजयेत्॥"



Vishnu Sasikumar

COMMUNICATION

These are not abstract prescriptions, but blueprints for strategic resilience. To be truly Sashakt, Bharat must not wait to react, it must anticipate, adapt, and act with clarity, capability, and civilizational confidence. A king who knows his enemy and prepares his people, who innovates in peacetime and communicates with clarity, shall remain unconquered. Let this be Bharat's Neeti. "A truly Sashakt Bharat will not conquer the world—it will stabilize it."



Zohra Banu

COLLABORATION

The Indian Foreign Service must remain cognizant of the strategic environment within which it operates. This military attachment was not only a professional exposure but a national education—bridging the silos between **the soldier in the trench and the diplomat at the table**. Through this engagement, the Officer Trainees gained an invaluable blend of strategic literacy, operational appreciation, and institutional respect—pillars upon which **Sashakt Bharat stands tall**.



Vikas Meena

COMPASSION

AND ONE DAY, I'LL RETURN

Years down the line, I'd like to go back to Kashmir on May 9- my birthday. Not to see soldiers stationed every 200 metres. Not to don bulletproof jackets. But to stay at a local homestay, sip noon chai by the Dal, and hear laughter in the streets instead of silence. Perhaps I'll toast to peace, and cheekily remind my Swiss colleagues that Switzerland is simply the 'Kashmir of Europe'.



Garima Mundra

A week-long Module on Economic Diplomacy for IRS (C&IT) OTs of 2023 batch from National Academy of Customs and Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN) at SSIFS during 14-18 July 2025

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) successfully conducted a five-day foreign policy training module from 14th to 18th July 2025 for the 76th Batch of Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes) Officer Trainees, including five officers from the Royal Government of Bhutan. The Officer Trainees are currently undergoing their professional training at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), the Central Training Institute of the Indian Revenue Service.

The module was curated as part of SSIFS's ongoing efforts to strengthen inter-CTI collaboration and to equip young civil servants with key insights into India's foreign policy and diplomacy - areas increasingly relevant to their future responsibilities in a globalized policy environment.

The inaugural session was presided over by Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS), who delivered a comprehensive address on the Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy. He underscored the enduring relevance of Chanakya's principles articulated in the Arthashastra, in shaping modern governance and diplomacy. The Dean also emphasized the importance of developing behavioural, domain-specific, and functional competencies in today's civil servants to enable effective leadership and decision-making.

Over the course of the program, Officer Trainees engaged in a series of curated thematic sessions encompassing both traditional and contemporary dimensions of international relations. Topics included India's Relations with West Asia, the Global Geopolitical Landscape, the Evolving Trajectory of India-China Relations, and India's Relations with Neighbours. The module also focused on emerging policy frontiers such as Strategic Technology and Diplomacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Climate Change and Energy Diplomacy, Defence Diplomacy, and Soft Power and Strategic Communication, reflecting the dynamic scope of India's diplomatic engagements.

On the concluding day, select Officer Trainees delivered presentations on critical themes, including WTO Negotiations and the inter-agency interface between the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Commerce (MoC), and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). These presentations demonstrated the Officer Trainees' grasp of the week-long module and its applicability to their professional domains.

During the final day, as a gesture of appreciation and encouragement, Dean(SSIFS) presented books to Officer Trainees who exhibited exceptional participation and enthusiasm throughout the training. The valedictory session was presided over by Joint Secretary (SSIFS), Ms. M. Ashwini Naidu.

The program reinforced the importance of equipping India's revenue officers with a nuanced understanding of diplomacy and international policy, underscoring the growing intersections between foreign policy and economic governance.

Some Glimpses from the Special Economic Diplomacy Week for IRS (C & IT) OTs of 2023 Batch at SSIFS during 14-18 July 2025



Visit to SSIFS by the Distinguished Visitor of ICCR, Mr. Geoffrey K. J. Onyeama

Dean (SSIFS) welcomed Mr. Geoffrey K.J. Onyeama, former Foreign Minister of Nigeria and his spouse at SSIFS on 24 July 2025, who were visiting India on the invitation of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) under its "Distinguished Visitors Program". They held wide ranging discussions over a working lunch, including on capacity building in the Global South. Out of the currently 106 MoUs signed by SSIFS, the 29th MoU was signed with Nigeria in 2007. Mr. Onyeama could also meet the Diplomats from Central & West African Countries who were present at SSIFS on their penultimate day of the two week long training program.



Special Two Days program for Indian Forest Service Officer Trainees of 2023 Batch at IGNFA, Dehradun on Foreign Policy and Environmental Diplomacy on 21-22 July 2025

As the first initiative emanating from the recently signed MOU between Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) and Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) for capacity building, SSIFS organized a two-day foreign policy and environmental diplomacy module for the 2023 batch of Indian Forest Service officers at IGNFA Dehradun on 21-22 July 2025. The module consisted of:

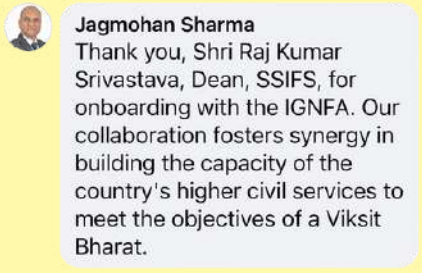
- Broad understanding of International Relations Theory, including Chanakya's wisdom of Statecraft and Diplomacy,
- Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy, and
- A simulation exercise on Environmental Diplomacy, specifically aiming at the negotiation skills, role play, awareness about different groupings' positions and interests in the context of Extended Development Goals 2045.

The module allowed the officer trainees to develop a nuanced understanding of foreign policy objectives and exercise of diplomacy to achieve them. It also gave them an opportunity to attempt some of their communication skills in the simulated setting of United Nations General Assembly.

The most proactive participants were rewarded with important books in the field of diplomacy.

The module was appreciated a lot by the 111 participants as well as the Director of IGNFA.

At every possible opportunity, SSIFS is contributing towards "Whole of Nation Approach" to capacity building at every possible opportunity.





Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India



1st Special Course for Diplomats from North & East African Countries
[Eritrea,Libya, Somalia, SouthSudan]
04-13 August 2025

The professional course aims at equipping participants with knowledge and perspectives on issues related to new trends in diplomacy, topical international and regional issues, and familiarising them with India, its culture, history, and its foreign policy.

India's dynamic and ever evolving partnership with North & East African countries is in keeping with India's spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' that "the world is one family". India has always been at the forefront to provide capacity-building and training to diplomats from Africa. In line with this thought, this training module has been curated to include domain, functional, and behavioural competencies which would enable the participants to represent their country in efficient, effective & enlightened manner.

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

Table Top & Simulation Exercises on WTO Negotiations, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) & Geopolitics of Emerging Tech

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

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE
सं वदं वि च पश्येम
विदेश मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India



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 six 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 include 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 maximum two weeks, emanating from 105 MoUs that SSIFS has signed in 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 Shri Raj Kumar Srivastava, IFS officer of 1997 batch. The Institute is located at Baba Gangnath Marg, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi.



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