Volume 6 – June 2025

VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Fifth Special Course for 34 Iraqi Diplomats was organised at SSIFS during 09-18 June 2025



Missions Attachment for IFS OTs during 23-27 June 2025

Beijing





Cairo




Colombo




Geneva




Jakarta




Moscow




FROM DEAN'S DESK



Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

Our IFS Officer Trainees of 2024 batch along with two diplomats from Bhutan, returned to SSIFS, after three months of their on-the-job training at different divisions of the MEA, for their 3-months-long Phase II of training between 2 June and 29 August. June month covered the themes of International Relations Theories and International Law, including understanding Chanakya's Artha-shastra and its timeless and valuable guidelines for making the nation state stronger through diplomacy. During the 6 sessions on Chanakya, including a few table top exercises, the OTs learnt the practical applications of principles and tools from Chanakya, into current issues of importance for India in terms of its external relationships and challenges. They had their second book club day on 13 June with three fireside chats with Authors, indeed a great experiential learning for all. Two further simulation exercises on Multilateral Diplomacy and Geo-economics, made the third week of June unique, where the OTs showed great confidence and efficiency to lead the sessions with a professional touch, making the exercise conducting experts surprised. The rest of the time was spent with heads of divisions of MEA, coming to SSIFS and covering India's bilateral relationships from Neighbourhood First to Extended Neighbourhood to Strategic Partnerships. The fourth week of June took the OTs to 6 Missions abroad in 5 groups of 6 OTs each to Beijing, Cairo, Geneva, Jakarta, and Moscow, and one group of 5 OTs to Colombo. All in all, a diversified experiential learning month for them.

SSIFS conducted the 5th Special Course for 34 Iraqi Diplomats between 09-18 June 2025 with a very focused need-based design of the program of eight working days with 20 knowledge sessions and a few simulation exercises, study visits within Delhi, and two social occasions to connect and develop long-term friendship among visiting delegation and experts from India. In the program, we underscored the importance of technology, both as a tool for smarter and efficient diplomacy as well as a measure of countries' comprehensive national power. We also developed some focused sessions on behavioural skills, so relevant for today's diplomacy. The final valedictory day on 18 June was the most satisfying day for all of us when we witnessed the professional thematic presentations by Iraqi diplomats based on their past seven days of learning from the program conducted by us at SSIFS.

SSIFS organised a day-long program for mid-career Indian Defence and Accounts Service officers on 11 June at the request of Arun Jaitley Institute of Financial Management. On the same day, we also held a session for a 12-member students delegation from Rashtriya Raksha University from Gandhinagar on Indian Foreign Policy, especially in the neighbourhood. We would do a week-long special program for Indian Customs Service Officers on 14-18 July at SSIFS at the request of National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN) from Palasamudram, and a two-day special program for 115 Forest Service Officers on 2023 batch at Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy in Dehradun on 21-22 July. One can see SSIFS is contributing in capacity building for so many partner institutions, in line with the guidance received from Capacity Building Commission and Hon'ble PM, to develop a "whole-of-nation" approach in designing and executing our mandate as a Centre of Excellence in Diplomatic Skills.

With best Wishes from SSIFS Family.

Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
30 June 2025

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

Fifth Special Course for Iraqi Diplomats (09-18 June 2025)

The Fifth Special Course for Diplomats from the Republic of Iraq was held at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service from 09-18 June 2025. 33 newly recruited diplomats led by Counsellor, Mr. Miqdad Al-noori 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 elaborated the pillars of the Indian Foreign Policy & discussed succinctly the 'Theories of International Relations' & their applicability in various diplomatic initiatives. He also explained how the Course modules address the three major competencies – Behavioural, Functional & Domain.

The training module for young Iraqi diplomats (2024 Batch) was curated to include domain, functional, and behavioural competencies, akin to the training of the Indian Foreign Service Officer Trainees with the aim to equip participants with knowledge and perspectives on issues related to diplomatic processes, new developments in technology, topical international and regional issues, and familiarising them with India, its culture, history, and its foreign policy. Some glimpses from the Knowledge Sessions are presented below :



Some Glimpses from the Iraqi 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 friendship.

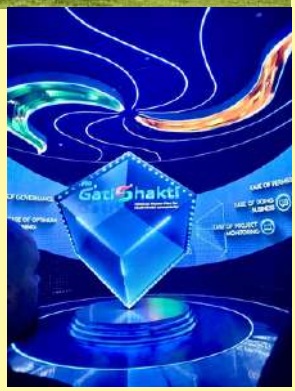



As part of study visits, the diplomats visited Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya and Anubhuti Lab (to understand PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi Modal Connectivity). The diplomats also visited some historical & cultural heritage sites in New Delhi.







Final Day of the Course - Reflections through Presentations & Valedictory

Dean SSIFS Ambassador Raj Srivastava conferred Valedictory certificates to the diplomats at the close of the 5th Special Course for diplomats from the Republic of Iraq at SSIFS on 18 June 2025 in the presence of C'dA from Embassy of Iraq, H.E. Nazar Mirjan. The participants made enriching country presentation on Cultural Landscape of Iraq, National Security & Fight Against Terrorism, it's Political System, Diplomatic Outlook, Economic Landscape, Development Opportunity & Iraq's Digital Transformation. Amb Srivastava wrapped up the program by commending the enthusiastic participation of diplomats in the program & wished them well for their future endeavours, including for their continued focus on strengthening India- Iraq relations.



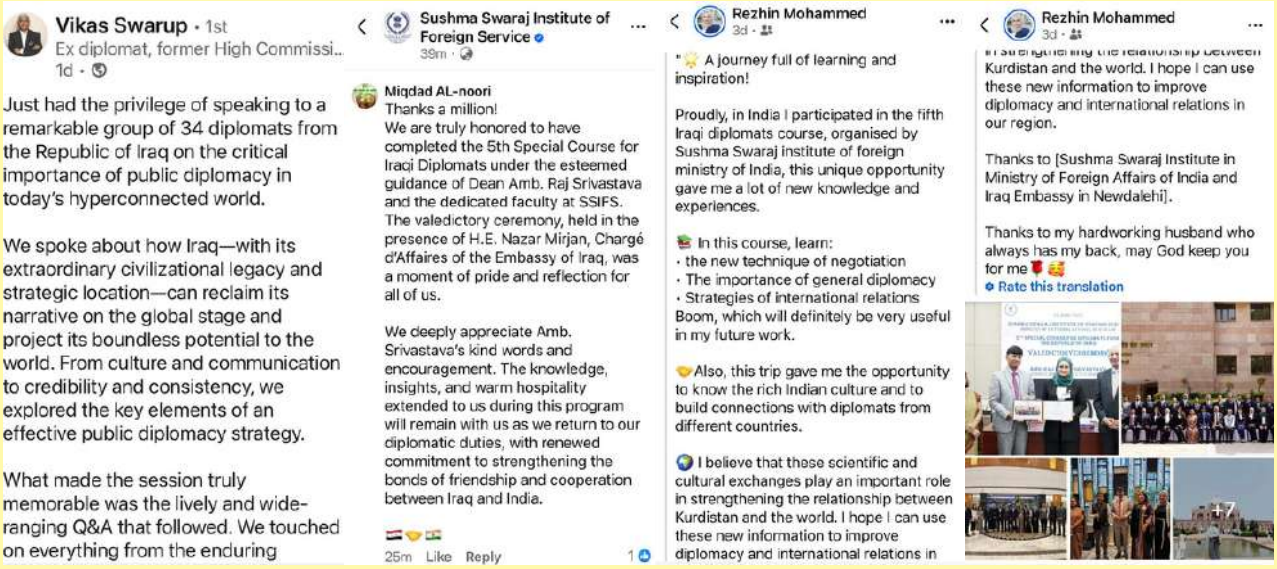








Some Social Media Posts about the Course from Speakers & Participants



Some Glimpses from the Knowledge Sessions of the IFS OTs Phase II

In the first three weeks of Phase II of the Induction Training Program of IFS OTs, there were 16 sessions organized on different aspects of India's relationships with different countries covering Neighbourhood First Policy, Sagar Diplomacy, Extended Neighbourhood - Act East, Think & Link West, Connect Central Asia Policies and Strategic Partnerships. They also had sessions on Multilateral & Thematic Diplomacy. Some glimpses are provided below:



QUIZ WARS: Battle of the Brains

The Academic Committee successfully hosted Quiz Wars, an electrifying battle of intellect where 7 formidable teams of three clashed across two power-packed rounds. Held in the gracious presence of Dean (SSIFS), the quiz tested more than just memory — it demanded strategy, speed, and serious thinking on ones feet.

The format had unique additions like a veto-powered hint system, pictographic puzzles, and a generous +10/+5 scoring model — but no negative marking (unlike the UPSC!). From decoding Cold War cables to tracing civilizational footprints, questions spanned international relations, history, diplomacy, and beyond. The format was designed to encourage strategic thinking and team collaboration.

The event was marked by a spirit of healthy competition, critical inquiry, and academic excellence. It served not only as a platform for testing knowledge but also as a celebration of collaborative learning.



Understanding Chanakya - Sessions on Critical & Strategic Thinking

Dr Kajari Kamal from Takshashila Institution took a session for the IFS OTs of 2024 batch titled 'Lessons from Arthashastra For Indian Diplomacy' on 09 June, 2025 at SSIFS, New Delhi in which **she discussed how Kautilya's timeless work remains relevant for statecraft even in modern times. Later, she also conducted a table top exercise for the OTs on the applicability of the principles of Arthashastra.**



The Second Book Club Day was organised on 13 June 2025

The second 'Book Club' day with three fireside chats with authors for 2024 Batch of IFS Officer Trainees, was a great day of experiential learning for all who attended. The event covered 3 books, each of which offered deep and nuanced insights into diverse areas of diplomacy. The program began with 'Friends: India's Closest Strategic Partners' by Prof. Sreeram Chaulia, wherein the OTs actively engaged with the author on the nuances of his book, bringing out the diverse dimensions of our Strategic Partnerships, highlighting their importance. **'The Other Side of Diplomacy' glanced into the lives of diplomatic spouses, & brought in eminent personalities who penned chapters for the book, including Smt. Jayshree Tripathi, Amb. Smita Purushottam, Smt. Shreedevi Nair Pal & Shri Ashok Pandey (retd IAS). Highlighting the depth and relevance of the book, Spouse of Foreign Secretary and the Chairperson of the EASA, Smt. Dolly Misri also graced the occasion by her presence. She recounted her own experiences, including some gems of advices to young OTs on important areas that we as officers sometimes overlook costing us dearly, both personally as well as professionally.** The day concluded with an engaging conversation with Shri. Tilak Devasher on his book 'The Pashtuns: A Contested History'. The interaction gave the OTs a deep insight into the fragmented history of Afghanistan and its continued geopolitical implications.



Experiential Learning Opportunities through Simulation Exercises

The session, led by **Shri Akshay Mathur**, Senior Director at the Asia Society Policy Institute, presented a **strategic table-top exercise on economic diplomacy**, focused on rescuing the Alexa Industrial Area in Alexandria. Participants explored real-world challenges such as fiscal constraints, foreign influence, national security, and trade access. They examined partnership options involving geopolitical powers like Shangrila, allies (Group X), and emerging economies like Babylon. He had enriched the discussion by sharing live case studies, including the current US-Ukraine deal, **encouraging collaborative problem-solving and negotiation to develop sustainable, interest-aligned strategies in complex, geopolitically sensitive economic scenarios.**



The session conducted by **Dr. Daniel J**., Senior Advisor at the Centre for UN Studies, United Service Institution of India (USI), **aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the workings of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and global development agendas. The session covered key frameworks such as Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also introducing the emerging XDG 2045 initiative. Through a UNGA simulation, IFS officers engaged with critical global challenges including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and outer space governance**. This helped in developing diplomatic negotiation skills and policy formulation responses. **The exercise further encouraged nuanced analysis of these issues through regional and national lenses, fostering a deeper appreciation for multilateral diplomacy in shaping sustainable global cooperation**.



Some Glimpses from the Mission Attachment of IFS OTs during 23-27 June

Beijing






Learnings from Mission Attachment in EoI Beijing, China (Amritanshu, Garima, Gokul, Jayasree, Utkarsh, and Vaibhav)

- Our visit to China was an eye-opening experience, with multi-layered learnings. China presents a compelling model of statecraft—politically anchored in party legitimacy, economically defined by scale and speed, culturally proud of its ancient roots, socially cohesive, and technologically ambitious.
- Our visits to the Silk Street market, the vibrant city of Tianjin with its Ancient Culture Street, Tianjin Eye and Haihe River, and the peaceful Liangma River cruise gave us a glimpse of everyday Chinese life and its evolving urban ethos. The Olympic Park and the MFA press briefing revealed how China blends symbolism with strategic messaging.
- At the AIIB headquarters and SCO Secretariat, we saw multilateralism in action—where influence is exercised through rules, relationships, and quiet negotiation. This Mission Attachment revealed a core truth: with vision and execution, even the most ambitious national dreams can become reality.

Cairo






Learnings from Mission Attachment in Cairo, Egypt (Annapurna, Atul, Laxman, Shivang, Swathi, and Zohra)

- Egypt and India share common challenges and perspectives of Global South with 3 pillars of Egyptian foreign policy i.e. Peace, Stability and Development matching with India's focus on D4D - Diplomacy for Development. The Egyptian view of world order is shaped by its strategic geography and historical legacy. It advocates a multipolar world order based on principles of sovereignty, non-interference and regional balance with Arab solidarity and support for Palestinian cause being two important pillars.
- India has substantial investments in Egypt, amounting to around USD 4.5 billion. Such investments represent not just economic ties, but strategic partnership.
- Egyptians have long been known as master builders — from the awe-inspiring pyramids to the grand mosques, medieval architecture, and now to the ambitious construction of a brand-new capital city (ACUD Egypt). This can be an avenue of cooperation on sustainable Urban development as India too looks on to develop new capital cities like Amravati.
- Egyptian historic culture, values, script and art echoes in every corner of the city. The celebration , preservation and promotion of Egyptian culture across streets, buildings and even Nile are good examples to show how modernity could be synergised with culture, history, values and ethos.
- During Operation Sindhu, the Embassy played a frontline role in coordinating the safe evacuation of Indian citizens from conflict zones—demonstrating the power of timely diplomacy, inter-agency coordination, and crisis preparedness. For a young diplomat, being part of such a mission offers invaluable insights into real-time decision-making, consular protection, and the human face of diplomacy during emergencies.

Some Glimpses from the Mission Attachment of IFS OTs during 23-27 June

Colombo



Learnings from Mission Attachment in HCI Colombo, Sri Lanka (Akanksha, Anjuga, Harishankar, Krishna, and Krishnakumar)

- The officer trainees embarked on a memorable journey across Sri Lanka, exploring the cities of Colombo, Dambulla, Sigiriya, Trincomalee, and Kandy. In Colombo, they visited the Suwa Seriya Foundation, an innovative emergency ambulance service gifted by the people of India, and toured the expansive Colombo West Terminal—the largest terminal in Sri Lanka, currently under development by Adani Group.
- En route to Trincomalee, they stopped at a recently inaugurated temperature-controlled warehouse, which is developed with the support from the Indian government. The adventure continued at Sigiriya, where the officer trainees hiked to the top of the iconic rock fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Trincomalee, the group received a briefing from Lanka IOC, highlighting the vital role of Indian companies in ensuring Sri Lanka's energy security.
- At Kandy, the officer trainees met with the Chief of Dalada Maligawa and interacted with monks from the Asigiriya Maha Pirivena, gaining insights into the religious and political significance of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.
- The group also called on the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister H.E Vijitha Herath and engaged with Sri Lankan Foreign Service officers to understand the functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Throughout the mission attachment, the officer trainees experienced the rich culture, history, and strong bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka.

Geneva



Learnings from Mission Attachment in PMI Geneva, Switzerland (Ashish, Katyayani, Kritika, Sathyanandhi, Vedika, and Vivek)

- Mission Attachment to Permanent Mission of India, Geneva was a deep dive into the essence of multilateralism- a unique diplomatic experience.
- The OTs visited the United Nations and the specialised agencies, namely- ILO, WIPO, UNHRC, WTO, ITU and WHO- witnessing how nations come together to tackle global issues.
- They also visited the PMI Geneva and the Embassy of India in Bern that represent India and its interests in Switzerland.
- Geneva's diversity was palpable, both in its institutions and its people, reflecting the values of collaboration and respect. As the OTs explored the Old Town and the lakeside, we felt the blend of Swiss, French, and international cultures. It was a proud moment to see India in this hub of diplomacy.

Some Glimpses from the Mission Attachment of IFS OTs during 23-27 June

Jakarta





Learnings from Mission Attachment in EoI Jakarta, Indonesia (Aman, Kinley, Rajat, Shreya, Sonam, and Vikas)

- Mission Attachment to Jakarta as part of SSIFS training was a rich and immersive experience that seamlessly blended diplomacy, culture, and strategic learning.
- Engaging with the Indian Ambassador to Indonesia and the Ambassador to ASEAN provided deep insights into India's diplomatic priorities in the region, especially within the frameworks of the Indo-Pacific and Act East Policy. At the ASEAN Secretariat, the OTs explored how India and ASEAN collaborate on connectivity, sustainability, and regional stability.
- Cultural visits to Borobudur and Prambanan temples brought alive the shared civilizational roots of Hinduism and Buddhism, highlighting the spiritual ties that bind us. The Istiqlal Mosque visit was a powerful symbol of Indonesia's religious harmony and inclusive ethos.
- Interactions with Indonesian and Australian diplomats added valuable perspectives on multilateralism and global partnerships.
- At the TVS facility, the group witnessed Indo-Indonesian economic synergy in action, while the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign reminded the OTs of the emotional and environmental responsibilities of diplomacy. As Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty remarked, "Diaspora is our institutional memory," and "Public diplomacy is the mouthpiece of our country, where the lines between truth and non-truth are blur"—words that captured the essence of the OTs' journey and the responsibilities they carry forward.

Moscow





Learnings from Mission Attachment in EoI Moscow, Russia (Abdul, Atul, Harsh, Jaswant, Vishnu, and Wardah)

- The Mission Attachment to Moscow provided the OTs a glimpse of working of different wings of Mission and Consulate and included institutional engagements with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow State Institute of International Relations which boasts of notable alumni serving as Russian diplomats, and Russian Times news channel.
- The group got a glimpse of Russian art, history, literature and culture; through visit to the estate of literary icon- Leo Tolstoy at Tula, Motherland Calling- a monument commemorating the martyrs of the Battle of Stalingrad and historical landmarks in Saint Petersburg.
- In Moscow, the IFS OTs called on Ambassador Vinay Kumar, acquainted themselves with the working of the various Wings of the Mission and different joint projects in economic, defense and nuclear fields. On 28 June, they also called on Consul General Neelam Rani at Indian Consulate in St. Petersburg.

SSIFS continued its partnerships with other Institutions for Capacity Building

Amb Raj Srivastava hosted Dr Aparna Varma, Director, School of International Cooperation, Security & Strategic Languages, **Rashtriya Raksha University** and her team of students & faculties at SSIFS on 11 June for two hours. **It is heartening to see that RRU as an institution of national importance is organizing degree programs where students are able to develop critical & strategic thinking which would make them ready to contribute towards the vision of Sashakt & Viksit Bharat!**









Special Day-long program for Mid-Career Officers from Indian Defence & Accounts Service at SSIFS on 11 June

On 11 June 2025, the Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM), in collaboration with the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), conducted a one-day attachment under the Mid-Career Training Program (MCTP), Phase-IV, for 20 officers of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS) with 14–18 years of service. The program aimed to broaden the strategic perspectives of the participants by exposing them to key elements of India's foreign and security policy landscape.

The day began with a session by Amb Raj Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS), who provided a comprehensive overview of the Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy. He emphasized on the structures of Indian Missions/ posts and used Chanakyas Arthashastra to highlight Indias Contemporary foreign policy.

This was followed by a session by Shri Puneet Agrawal, Additional Secretary (Indian Ocean Region), Ministry of External Affairs, who spoke on Maritime Security and the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) Approach. He outlined India's maritime interests, regional partnerships, and its commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

Major General Rajendra Singh Yadav, VSM (Retd), from the United Service Institution of India (USI), delivered an insightful session on Defence and Military Diplomacy. He emphasized the evolving role of defence diplomacy in achieving strategic objectives and strengthening bilateral and multilateral military ties. The session highlighted the growing significance of military exercises as tools of soft power and strategic messaging, underscoring the need to make such exercises more visible, frequent, and proactive. He also touched upon India's capability to conduct swift and effective evacuation of its diaspora during crises, citing recent operations as evidence of robust military preparedness and coordination in complex international environments.

The day concluded with Col (Dr) Rajneesh Singh (Retd), MP-IDSA, who provided an in-depth analysis of India's defence and military capabilities. He focused on the critical balance between indigenization and the strategic requirement for selective external procurement. Emphasizing on the trajectory of reforms under initiatives such as Aatmanirbhar Bharat and the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), he discussed policy advancements encouraging domestic defence manufacturing, public-private partnerships, and innovation ecosystems. His session stressed that achieving self-reliance in defence production is vital for strategic autonomy and for developing a resilient, future-ready military-industrial complex.











Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India



1st Special Course for 42 diplomats from 8 Central & West African countries

[Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Niger,
Republic of Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe]

16-25 July 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.

In keeping with India's spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' that "the world is one family", India has 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

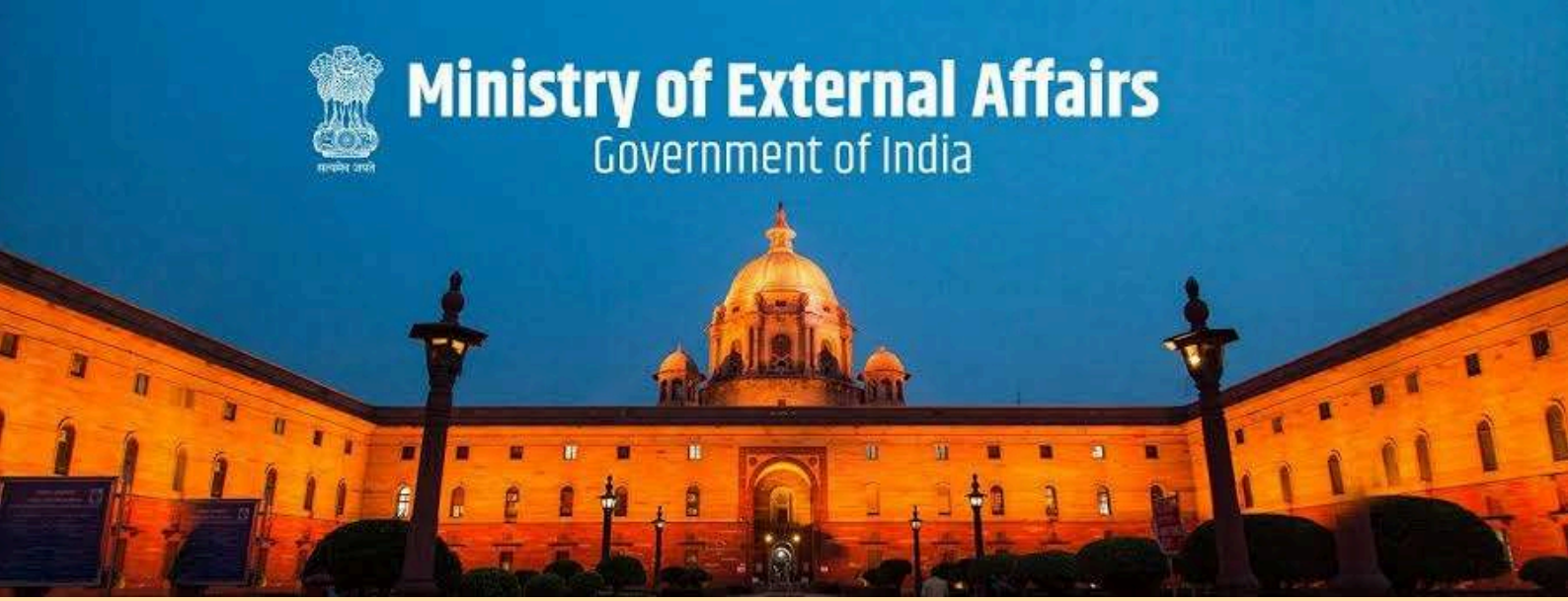
Understanding India through visits to heritage sites, enjoying its diverse culture and cuisines

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

सं वेदं वि च पश्येम

विदेश मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India





3rd Special Course for Global South Young Diplomats Forum (GSYDF) 08-19 September 2025

As a flagship program started by SSIFS in 2023 (as a result of the Voice of the Global South Summit hosted by Honorable PM of India), 3rd edition of the GSYDF this year will continue to affirm the commitment of India to "Unite in Voice and Purpose" in addressing the concerns & priorities of the Global South by building synergies and connections with young diplomats from these countries.

"The strength of the Global South lies in its Unity."

-PM of India
Shri Narendra Modi



"On the strength of this Unity, we will move forward towards a new direction."

-PM of India
Shri Narendra Modi

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विदेश मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India







Visit to "Scenic, Serene, Sublime"
State of Odisha
(12-14 September, 2025)



12 September, 2025 (Friday)

- Arrival at Bhubaneshwar (Evening) & stay at selected hotel/venue

13 September, 2025 (Saturday)

[Pre-noon]

- Visit to Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple
- Visit to World Skill Center
- International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT)

[Post-noon]

- Odisha Crafts Museum (Kalabhoomi)
- Light & Sound Show at Dhauligiri

14 September, 2025 (Sunday)

- Visit to Sun Temple, Konark
- Travel back & Departure from Bhubaneshwar













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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