



Vivekananda
International
Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Seeking Harmony in Diversity

Seeking Harmony in Diversity

Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Annual Report | 2020-21

ॐ द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं
शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्तिरापः
शान्तिरोषधयः
शान्तिः वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वेदेवाः
शान्तिब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्वं
शान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि ॥

May there be peace in the illuminated
world, in space, on the earth, in waters
and in herbs and plants. Gods of the world
may be in peace. May peace pervade the
Supreme Being. May peace be everywhere.
May there be only peace and nothing else.
And may that all pervading peace come
upto me.

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*Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders.
Think that you, young men of our motherland,
are destined to do this. Put yourselves to the task.
Lord bless you.*

- Swami Vivekananda

Chairman's Message

I must congratulate the Director and Team VIF for their excellent work during and inspite of one of the most difficult years in the history of humanity for India and the world.

The comprehensive annual report on the extensive range of activities bears testimony to their work as a team. The Director of the VIF deserves a special mention for his commitment and devotion which ensured the smooth and efficient functioning of the foundation during the year.

The Secretary and her administrative team deserve to be congratulated for their unstinting support and cooperation for the smooth conduct of operations at the VIF. The Director's report on the domestic and geopolitical situation and on diverse activities of the VIF is specific and instructive. On the whole, despite trying times, the VIF has had a satisfactory and successful year.

When the virus outbreak at Wuhan turned into a global pandemic last winter, many great minds said it would lead to such unprecedented, far reaching and undiagnosable changes as would change the world order forever. Against this background, there has been a dramatic change for the worse since then in the relations between Western powers and China, which points to a risky future ahead for the present global order and its institutional framework. The pent up effect of the irrational appeasement of China by the West, kept well suppressed and deferred by suave and persuasive geopolitical diplomacy for too long, despite China being increasingly aggressive outside and regressive within, has also added to the pace, breadth and complexity of the changes.



Yet, no one was, as we had seen in the Random Thoughts 2020¹, and even now, is sure about what that 'change forever' would mean and be. No one is clear about its depth, reach and consequences to the world and to individual nations. There is more muted and less open discussion and debate on multi-dimensional issues such as, with the rise of China, whether there would be a change in the world order and if so, what would be that change; what would be the shape of the future world order; whether today's liberal democracies would continue to lead the world order as they have been doing since the Cold War ended; whether there would be a new Cold War; whether liberal democracies which have declared China a systemic adversary, would take it on; whether liberal democracies which are under attack from the left and right, would continue to be liberal at all; with the world so divided, whether there will be disorder; whether the West would seek a broader coalition of democracies to sustain the global order -- and the like. All such and more issues are on the table for discussion.

In the immediate context, a year-and-a-half after its outbreak, Covid-19, which has devastated the world in a manner unknown since World War II, is relentlessly savaging families, communities, business, trade, economies and most importantly, the very way of life of the people, with no end to the misery in sight. The only positive news is that a massive vaccination campaign is on which has definitely brought down the mortality, if not, the infection rate. The post Covid-19 outbreak world, which is not past Covid as yet, continues to undergo monumental changes not seen since the melting of the Cold War.

Given the abnormal conditions clouding the world and India, this year's message by Chairman, VIF titled Random Thoughts 2021, is also like the previous year's message, a random survey of where the world and nations, India in particular, stand and what is the likely future course. The momentous changes taking place are so fundamental and far reaching, that the entire post-World War II and post-Cold War foundations of the world seem to need reexamination.

Random Thoughts 2021 is a humble attempt to provoke a debate on larger issues, including civilisational, cultural and social diversity issues that had missed their place in the debates leading to the formation of the post-World War II and post-Cold War global order which stands challenged today.

Random Thoughts 2021 is really random also because of the unusual range of subjects it touches upon, namely from emerging civilisational, religious and historical issues; to out-of-

1 Random Thoughts 2019-2020 (ISBN: 978-93-90061-06-8) by S Gurumurthy. Available at - <https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/Random%20thoughts.pdf>

the-box suggestions for astronomy-based education for conflict avoidance, to how liberal democracies are short-termist as compared to long-termist autocratic China; to how the liberal and civilisational democracies like India are different, to how Indian democracy is under threat both from autocratic China and Western liberalism; to how market economics is distinct from market societies, to contemporary geopolitical, geo-economics, geo-strategic issues with a particular reference to India and India's strategic relations with select countries and the emerging strategic relations between India and the -- just to mention a few.

Random Thoughts is a consensual position of Team VIF on diverse issues that confront India and the world. It is inevitably long, considering the extraordinary and multiple issues and challenges confronting the world today, which calls for a response from the Indian perspective. The expectation is that experts, scholars, fellows and associates of the VIF should study, debate and offer their views on Random Thoughts so that it becomes the base from which the VIF will initiate dialogue within the strategic community in India and outside.

October 2021
New Delhi



S. Gurumurthy
Chairman, VIF

[***Click here to read Random Thoughts 2021 in detail.***](#)



VIVEKANANDA
INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION



About the VIF

The aim and purpose of founding the VIF was to bring about a paradigm shift in the national and global discourse in India. VIF is a non-partisan independent think tank focusing on the study of contemporary India – its international relations, security problems, governance, and civilisational issues from an Indian perspective. Monitoring emerging trends, it aims at engaging experts, both within and outside the Foundation, to evolve informed policy options and work out alternative strategies. Through public discourse and interactions, it strives to create greater awareness among people and partner with civil society to make people vital stakeholders in national affairs.

Some of India's leading experts in the fields of security, diplomacy, governance and economy have got together under the aegis of the Foundation to generate ideas and stimulate action that could lead to India's all-round empowerment and its ability to contribute to regional and global security and stability. Independently funded, VIF is not aligned to any political party, religious group or business house. Trust Deed of the VIF prohibits it from accepting any donations from foreign sources other than the people from Indian origin who are associated with the organisation. VIF has not received any foreign donation till date since its inception. Dedicated to India's long-term strategic, developmental and civilisational interests, it aims to ideate on fresh approaches and channelise them to those responsible for managing the affairs of the nation on the one hand and people at large on the other.

VIF works under the guidance of a Trust with eminent people in public life as its Trustees.

It has an Advisory Council and an Executive Committee comprising of distinguished persons from diverse fields with high professional accomplishments and long experience.

The Director is the Chief Executive of the Foundation and is nominated by the Trust.

Objectives

- **Analyse** India's external and internal security environment to offer effective inputs to shape policies and response strategies.
- **Offer** policy alternatives to contain internal conflicts caused by India's socio-economic disparities and political rivalries.
- **Ideate** on economic policies and models that would facilitate the well-being and prosperity of one and all.
- **Interact** with civil society and offer institutional support for exchange of ideas among conflicting groups.
- **Deliberate** on public policies, the working of national institutions and democratic bodies, and suggest measures for their revival and rejuvenation.
- **Evolve** benchmarks for good governance and efficiency in public institutions.
- **Reassess**, formulate and develop India's civilisational and cultural imperatives in an increasingly globalised world.
- **Promote** initiatives that further the cause of peace and global harmony.

*True knowledge is not attained by
thinking. It is what you are; it is what
you become.*

- Sri Aurobindo

Year Outcomes

450

Commentaries &
Articles

29

Publications

86

Major Events

8

Books

9

Reports

4

National Security

55

VIF Scholars in
Media

17

Podcasts

9

Foreign
Interactions



Website

1644833

Views

40554

Downloads

601487

Visitors



4577000

Impressions



787310

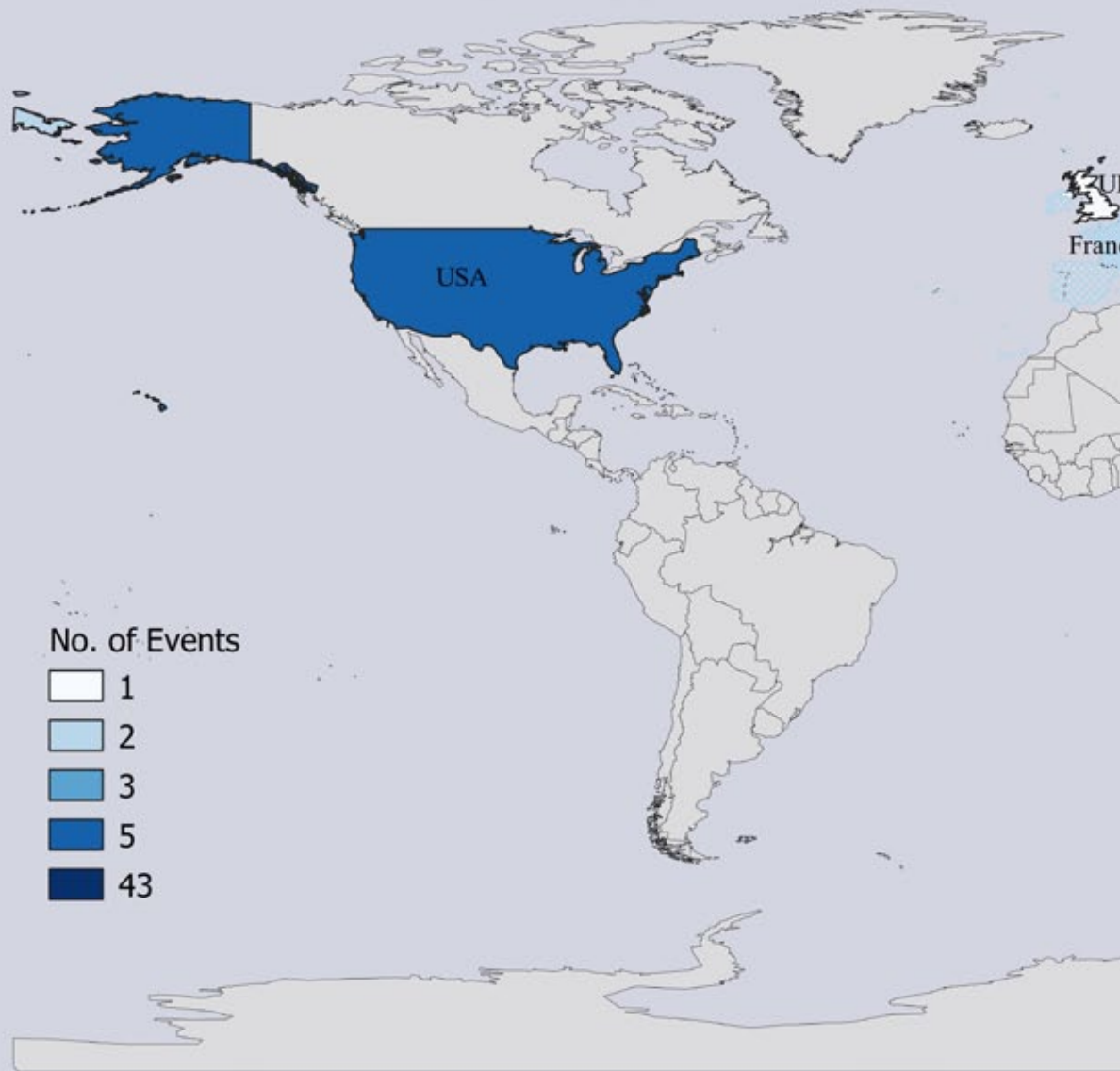
Impressions



14.8K

Hours watched on
Channel

Heat Map of Events Conducted:



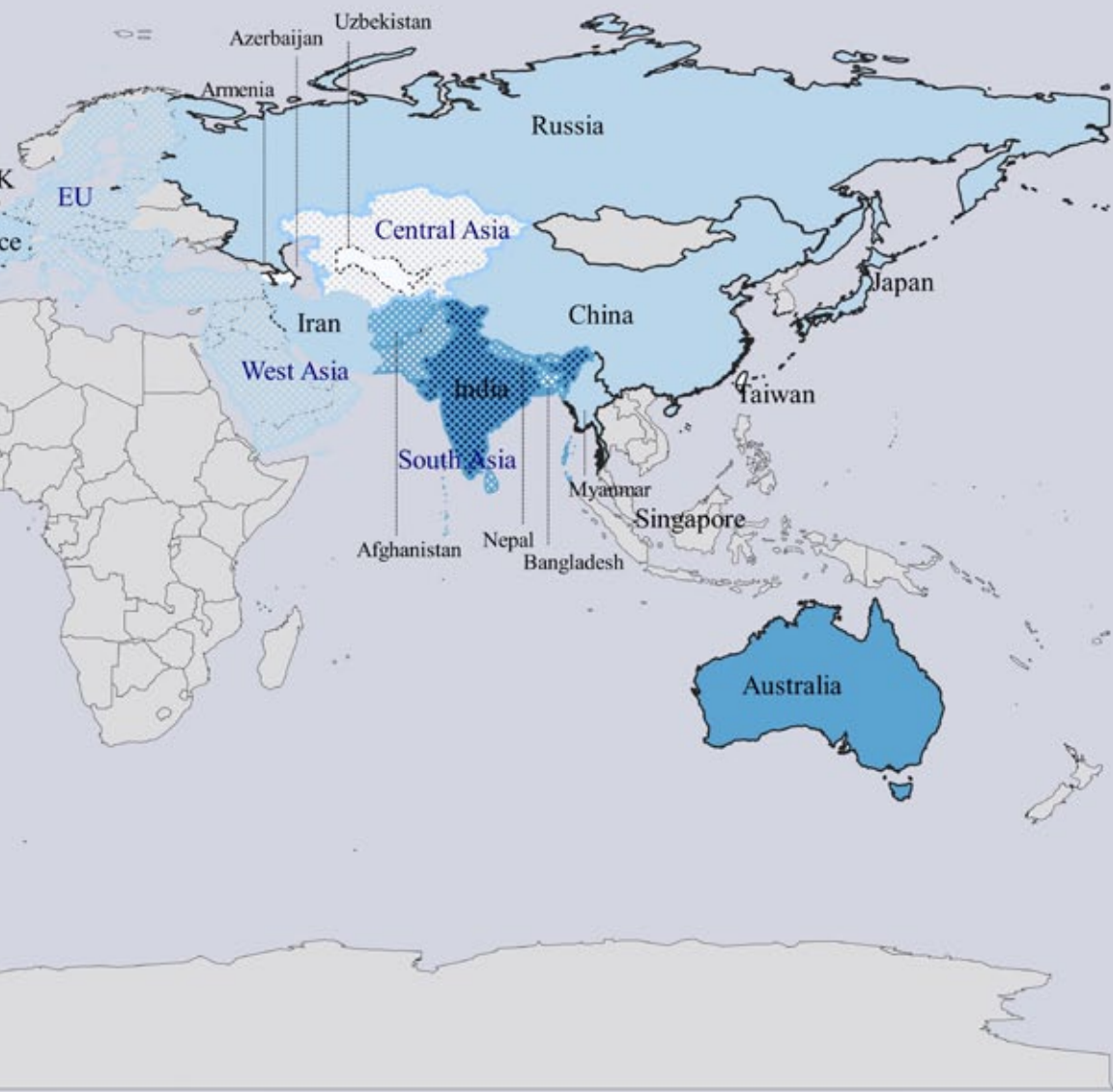
Regions like EU, South Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, etc. are colour coded and represented in grids

Map is for thematic representation only, it does not represent any legal survey.

Map by : Jyothy Nair

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Country-based Frequency



for easy understanding.

*Each man and woman, that is to say, when
perfectly educated, becomes an epitome of the history
either of his or her own race, or of Humanity
as a whole.*

- Sister Nivedita

Director's Preface

The year 2020-21 will go down as one of the most traumatic years in recent history because of the large-scale world-wide deaths and disruptions caused by the Covid-19 virus. Possibly leaking from a virology lab in Wuhan, the virus has reshaped the global, regional and national environment. With the pandemic still raging despite the invention of a vaccine, it is anybody's guess how the situation will develop in the future. India has seen a virulent second wave attack from March 2021 onwards. The country was unprepared to deal with the Delta variant of the virus which overwhelmed the health system completely. Its health and economic effects will remain with us for a long time.



The pandemic has accelerated the changes initiated after the end of the Cold War and introduced several new elements. The most visible trend in the post virus phase is the return of great power rivalries.

The Vivekananda International Foundation as a leading think tank devoted to understanding global, regional and domestic trends, was naturally preoccupied with the study of the pandemic and its impact on global politics, international security and economy. Our researchers and scholars closely tracked international developments for their impact on India and its future. We reached out to experts in different disciplines to understand the nature of the unfolding challenges.

While remaining physically closed during the year due to Covid, the VIF was active in terms of organising virtual meetings, interactions, seminars, publications et cetera. We

home can be as productive and rewarding as meeting physically. Of course, the human side of face-to-face interactions was missing. That, however, did not impact the quality of research and outreach.

We soon realised that Covid would be a devastating event for the whole world. Some of us, in our studies, had been arguing for a long time that India should be prepared for meeting non-traditional security threats, including pandemics.¹ Even before the lockdown was announced in March 2020, the Vivekananda International Foundation had started work on understanding the nature of the pandemic and its likely effects. We organised a meeting of medical experts from the Armed Forces to discuss the nature of the virus and how it would impact the health of the country. We prepared a detailed report which was shared with key departments of the government, outlining the preparations that the government would have to do to meet the pandemic challenge. Our scholars put together a compendium of ideas and technologies relating to the Covid 19 virus. These were relatively unknown at that time.

In 2020, India faced a triple crisis comprising of massive health, economic and security crisis dimensions. In living memory, the country had no experience of dealing with a pandemic of such proportions. The economy registered a negative growth of seven percent. And, most unexpectedly, the Chinese took unilateral measures to alter the status of the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh. These mutually reinforcing crises highlighted the understated dimensions of national security. The pandemic has underlined the importance of adopting a holistic approach to national security, which has been missing. For instance, the importance of health security in national security came out strongly during the crisis. India handled the initial crisis relatively better before the much more severe second wave struck the country in February 2021, which took everyone by surprise. The health system, at strain during the best of times, was simply not prepared to deal with the millions of new infections which overwhelmed the country in a matter of a few weeks. The resilience of the entire society was tested severely during the second wave. The pandemic highlighted the urgent need for a much more robust health infrastructure in the country.

Responding to the security challenges posed by China, our Armed Forces, backed by deft diplomacy, stood firm throughout the stand-off. They also faced a real possibility of a two-front situation developing on the borders. The crisis revealed the true face of China, which

1 Ambassador Satish Chandra, as Deputy NSA in the early 2000s, had been sensitising the government to the threats of pandemics to the population and the country.

is bent upon leaving a mark on the emerging world order through coercion and aggression. Chinese expansionism was visible in its actions. This is a reality India will have to take into account while resetting its relations with China.

The VIF discussed these issues thoroughly during the year. The experts highlighted the urgency of attending to the task of strengthening our Armed Forces, the need for indigenous defence production, the importance of jointness and synergy. Our attention must be on building the long-term capabilities of the Armed Forces to prepare them for 21st-century conflict scenarios. We need high-quality infrastructure in our border areas. The Armed Forces must be prepared for the 21st-century scenarios of information warfare and regional conflicts. The cyber and ISR capabilities need to be improved. The security crisis has brought to the fore many issues concerning the Armed Forces. All these issues were discussed thoroughly at the VIF during the year. India was fortunate that the office of Chief of Defence Staff was in place and the importance of jointness, synergy and coordination was highlighted. The Chief of Defence Staff delivered a lecture at the VIF on reform in the Armed Forces.

It is becoming clear that great power rivalries are reemerging in a post-Covid world. U.S. President Joe Biden has indicated basic continuity with his predecessor Donald Trump when it comes to China and Russia. Both are regarded as strategic rivals. Biden is building a coalition of 'democracies' to meet the challenge of 'authoritarian' regimes. His focus is on climate change, democracy, human rights and religious freedom. His method would be forming issue-specific coalitions of the willing while keeping the door for cooperation with the adversaries open on certain issues. Thus, India will have to watch the evolution of a new world order carefully and position itself appropriately. India needs to ramp up its self-reliance in critical areas even as it builds on engagement of consequence. Economic rejuvenation, technology, health, education and comprehensive national power will be the key determinants. India will also need to harness its civilisational attributes and soft power suitably to exploit its strengths.

Indian diplomacy will also need to be beefed up to ensure that the country is well prepared to meet the security challenges from the China-Pakistan combine. In this context, the Indo-Pacific-centric Quadrilateral Security Alliance (QUAD) assumes great significance. India will also need to watch the evolution of NATO carefully, which is now taking on board the Chinese dimension in its changing security concept. U.S.- Russia, U.S.- China rivalries will have an impact on India. The VIF covered these issues in great detail during the year.

Diplomacy will become even more complicated in the post-pandemic period. We need a new kind of diplomacy that prioritises strategic autonomy, long term thinking, strategic partnerships and interest-based coalitions. We need to master the art of strategic assessments, using technology, leveraging inherent strengths and safeguarding one's own interests, while also acting as a force for the global good. The emphasis on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam along with self-reliance is the motto of India's foreign policy.

During the pandemic, Indian diplomacy went into high gear. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar held several significant interactions with counterparts to strengthen India's engagement with the world. India leveraged its inherent capabilities to position itself as a 'pharmacy' of the world and as a 'generous' country. India's success in evacuating hundreds of thousands of stranded Indian and foreign nationals in different countries through Air India's Vande Bharat flights, export of medicine even to developed countries like the U.S., manufacture of medicine and contribution of millions of doses to needy countries improved her image and projected its position as a reliable country. Yet, several articles in western media began to criticise India for its inability to handle the second wave of the pandemic, ignoring the fact that the severity of the second wave was unexpected.

While the economy shrank massively in the first quarter, it began to recover rapidly in the subsequent quarters. The government's Atmanirbhar programme, the focus on self-reliance, the encouragement to domestic production and the vocal for local campaign were the highlights of the government's rescue plans. Even more important was the USD 20 billion rescue package the government outlined to help the economy and the most vulnerable sections of society.

Taking advantage of the crisis, the government unfolded a series of fundamental socio-economic reforms which have laid the foundation of the emergence of a future India. The task of reaching the USD five trillion economy by 2025 has suddenly become more challenging due to the pandemic. We also have to address the long-term impact of the pandemic on jobs, small-scale industry and the informal sector of the economy.

The Indian public supported the Prime Minister and the government's strategy to deal with the pandemic although, as could be expected, there was criticism from the opposition. But that is normal in a democracy. While the public cooperated with the government in the lockdown, it was obvious that massive fatigue had also set in. So when the lockdown

was lifted, Covid appropriate behaviour was not followed in large election rallies, social functions and religious gatherings. The authorities had let their guard down. The narrative that India had won the war on Covid and done better than other countries proved to be over optimistic. The country had to pay a heavy price for the complacency that had set in as it saw the emergence of a severe second wave of Covid infections which is continuing to sweep the country as this report is being written. The shortage of oxygen, hospitals beds, essential medicine and the unseemly bickering between the Centre and the states, and between the states, showed the lack of coordinated action that was needed to win the war on Covid. Regrettably, there were several issues between the Centre and the states on Covid and vaccines. However, the silver lining was that the government was able to put in place a massive vaccination drive, unprecedented in human history. The drive was continuing well despite some initial hitches and unavoidable politics on the sensitive issue.

Main Activities

The VIF followed and analysed these trends most carefully. We set up several expert groups to track global developments and analyse their impact on India. These groups are:

- Pakistan Study Group moderated by Mr Tilak Devasher
- The US Group moderated by Amb. Arun K. Singh
- The China Group moderated by Amb. Ashok Kantha
- The Europe Group moderated by Amb. Anil Wadhwa
- The Indo Pacific Group moderated by Vice Admiral Anil Chopra
- The West Asia Group moderated by Amb. Anil Trigunayat
- Strategy Group anchored by General N.C. Vij

The study groups kept a close eye on key developments and produced an in-depth analysis. A compilation of the reports prepared by the study groups is available on the VIF website.

Review of VIF's major activities

The scope and tempo of the VIF's activities have been expanded and accelerated as the following table shows.

Description	April 2020 – March 2021
Books	8
Monographs	3+1=4
VIF Briefs + VIF Papers	11
Task Force Report /VIF Reports	1+8=9
Articles and commentaries	450
Scholars outreach (Articles outside VIF)	56
Podcasts	17
National Security Journal (Online)	4
Global Developments & Analysis	Weekly
China Daily Digest & Neighbourhood News Digest	Daily
International Development & Defense, National Security and Terrorism	Fortnightly
Seminars, Conferences & Interactions	67
Collaborative Seminars	10
Programme on Indian Strategic Thinking	3
Students outreach	3
Samvad	1 (Japan)
Vimarsh	12
VIF Videos	42
Additions to the Library	162 (Books)
Library E Resources+ Databases	260+36=296
Tweets issued	1,414
Followers on Twitter	24,118
Followers on Facebook	12,172
Website hits (Cumulative)	5,86,884

Over sixty five issue-specific virtual meetings were held to discuss different aspects of India's policies. The VIF issued 25 issue briefs and papers, 9 task force reports, published 450 web articles & commentaries and 17 podcasts during the year.

Distinguished diplomats, armed forces officials, experts and political figures were invited to share with us their views on specific topics. The resident ambassadors of Armenia, France, Germany, the U.S. and Australia addressed the VIF community. Several senior officials, experts, academics were invited for interactions with Indian experts. Quad-plus think tank dialogues were held quarterly.

As is the practice, every month a distinguished personality was invited to deliver a Vimarsh lecture virtually at the VIF. We had the honour of having the three service chiefs on the Vimarsh platform.

Our outreach to counterpart institutions and foreign strategic community continued although we could not host them physically nor visit them due to Covid restrictions. Virtual bilateral dialogues were held with Taiwan, Uzbekistan, the Quad countries, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, among others.

Our publication program continued uninterrupted during the year. We published eight books during the year. Sage published India's Foreign-Policy: Surviving in a Turbulent World, edited by Arvind Gupta and Anil Wadhwa.

The VIF also put together a volume on the different dimensions of Atmanirbhar Bharat. This is being edited jointly by S. Gurumurthy and Arvind Gupta. Prime Minister Modi sent a letter of appreciation to the foundation on the publication of the book.

Our quarterly journal National Security was published online. Two issues were devoted to special themes like BIMSTEC and Nuclear Challenge. Two general issues carried multiple themes related to the post-Covid international environment with implications for India. Themes such as the post-Covid world order, non-traditional security, the politicisation of WHO, Biden's policies, history, civilisation and identity, China's influence operations, the concept of a Knowledge GDP etc. were taken up. It is a matter of satisfaction that the journal National Security is stabilising and will soon be available in print format also.

Our website was as active as ever. Over half-a-million visitors visited the website. A large number of commentaries written by experts on a variety of themes were carried.

The VIF outreach on civilisation issues continued unabated. Professor Dr Shashi Prabha of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan delivered a series of lectures on Indian philosophy for beginners. These proved to be immensely informative and popular. We have also started work on producing a compilation of Shanti prayers from the Rig Veda. We also organised panel discussions on the traditional medicine system and its fusion with modern medicine. Several discussions were organised on the new education policy, which were anchored by Prof. K.K. Agarwal. Important discussions were held on Vivekananda and his teachings on specific occasions.

Our scholars appeared regularly on television discussions and also wrote articles in the mainstream newspapers and websites. They also participated in the events organised by other think tanks.

Our young scholars were encouraged to research critical issues. Several useful compendiums like the one on Jammu and Kashmir, were brought out. Young professionals were encouraged to hold meetings and seminars among themselves to explore new areas.

Like in the previous years, we organised lectures by prominent experts as a part of our outreach to the diplomatic community-based in India. Engaging with the resident diplomatic community has become an important part of our regular activity.

The VIF hosted a former Prime Minister of Nepal and the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan for a face-to-face meeting with experts. Our Ambassador in Russia came to us for an in-person meeting. We also hosted virtually the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. These interactions yielded important insights into the developments in our neighbourhood as well as in the region.

The Pakistan Study Group (PSG) brought out an edited book titled 'Pakistan Insights 2020'. The articles provide a penetrative analysis of Pakistan under Imran Khan. Pakistan Insight has now become an annual publication of the VIF.

A close watch was kept on the India-China military standoff. Top military experts met regularly to understand the complex dynamics of the stand-off and the intentions of the Chinese. The discussions touched upon essential issues like India's military preparedness and the possibilities of a two-front military scenario. The insights generated during discussions were selectively shared with the government.

The VIF organised several sessions on Taiwan and Tibet issues. We interacted with top think tanks and experts in Taiwan and also members of the Tibetan community.

We interacted with the CII regularly and organised several interactions on economic issues as they unfolded during the pandemic.

Key Findings

Some of the key findings of the intense activity undertaken by the VIF can be summarised below. The list is suggestive and not exhaustive:

- The pandemic heralds the beginning of a new phase in global and regional politics. The world is making a transition to a new order. The period of transition will be marked by great power rivalries, economic volatility, supply chain disruptions, the stress in multilateralism, a race for critical mineral resources and new technologies. India will have to deal with this highly volatile, vulnerable and uncertain world. Proactive efforts and new approaches would be required. We will require a high degree of intellectual capital to understand these changes.
- India is shedding its inhibitions and is now engaging with the world more confidently. Post- Covid, it is positioning itself as a 'generous' nation in the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and One Earth, One Health.
- China will pose the greatest challenge to India's security. its rise has several other manifestations, including the deepening of an unholy nexus with Pakistan and China's inroads into the Indian neighbourhood. India will have to enhance its own material capabilities and acquire greater comprehensive national strength to reduce the asymmetry with China.
- While India's "neighbourhood first" policy is sound, it requires to be filled with even greater content. India's relations with Nepal have taken a hit. India's neighbours will continue to balance India with China. This is a reality with which India has to deal with.
- The strengthening of the Quad is welcome. India should participate in the emerging alliance of democracies and new alignments in the Indo-Pacific. However, it must be kept in mind that the Indo-Pacific concept is still in an ascent state. The U.S.-China dynamic and the U.S.-Russia relations will shape the new geopolitics. Many countries are not yet convinced of its utility and they feel that tensions in the region might


increase. India's outreach to these countries particularly in our neighbourhood and in ASEAN need to be enhanced.

- One lesson from Covid is that India must improve and expand its health infrastructure rapidly. This will require a comprehensive approach and resources. The second wave of the pandemic showed that India has been slow in addressing these shortcomings.
- Geopolitics will be shaped by the technology race. India cannot afford to be left behind. Technology is going to underpin India's rise. India's science and technology ecosystem needs to be vastly improved. There is an urgent need for a well thought out science and technology policy and a roadmap.
- India's new education policy is good but it will require resources for implementation. The pandemic has adversely affected the future of millions of students. The education system will need to be rebuilt for the post-pandemic future. The digital divide is going to affect students. We will have to be sensitive to the needs of the problems of young students, parents and teachers.
- The pandemic has also adversely impacted jobs. A large number of women have been pushed out of the workforce. We should be concerned about the increasing inequality in the country as this could lead to many socio-economic and national security problems.
- While the government has unfolded many programs, the participation of the private sector should be encouraged. The government should keep an eye on the increasing debt. The power sector is saddled with huge debt. The financial sector is also under the stress of NPAs though some laudable steps have been taken to address these issues. India's taxation system needs to be overhauled. The tax-GDP ratio needs to be improved. There is a lot of scope in improving governance across the spectrum. In particular, the practical aspect of cooperative federalism needs to be strengthened.
- The friction between Big Tech companies (platforms) and the government is growing, as the GOI-Twitter face-off showed. This is a global trend. India will have to be mindful that in this age of fake news and false narratives, enormous damage can be done by non-accountable forces. It will need to develop a proper policy to deal with fake news et cetera.

- In the new age, data is the new oil. It is a national resource. It is essential India develops a suitable legal framework relating to data sovereignty, data sharing and privacy. The bill on data is lying with the parliament for several years now.
- The Western media has carried several motivated stories, including the rise of 'majoritarianism' in India. Suitable counters will have to be found. India's democracy is strong, but an improvement in governance is called for.
- Competitive politics which has affected even the local level elections has led to polarisation in the society. Some of the state elections have brought out the negative tendencies of electoral politics. The political class and the political parties must come to some common minimum understanding of national interest so that national security issues are not politicised. It is necessary to ensure that the increasingly competitive electoral environment does not create tensions in society. Politics sans ethics and morality and lacking the sense of service and dedication can be counterproductive.

It is a matter of satisfaction that despite the constraints of resources, the Vivekananda International Foundation has continued to fulfil its duties as a responsible nationalist think tank. We have continued with an active program of engagement and interaction, research and dissemination. We are encouraged by the fact that many people want to associate with the VIF. We will need to consider how best to take the Vivekananda International Foundation to a higher level of activity.

The Vivekananda International Foundation will continue to deepen and expand its activities in the coming year. I would like to thank the entire VIF family for continuing with their activities despite the difficulties created by the pandemic. I would also like to thank the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council for their continued support and guidance.



Dr Arvind Gupta, IFS (Retd)

Director, VIF

(Former Deputy National Security Advisor
& Former Director General, IDSA)

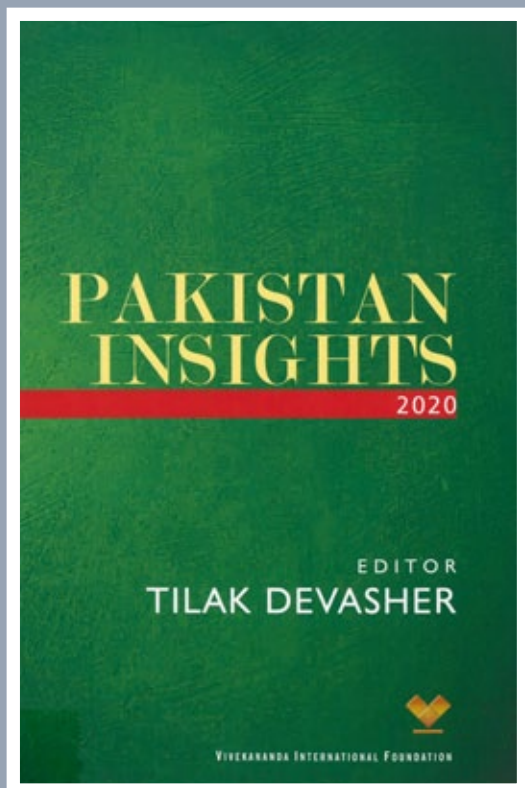
September 2021
New Delhi



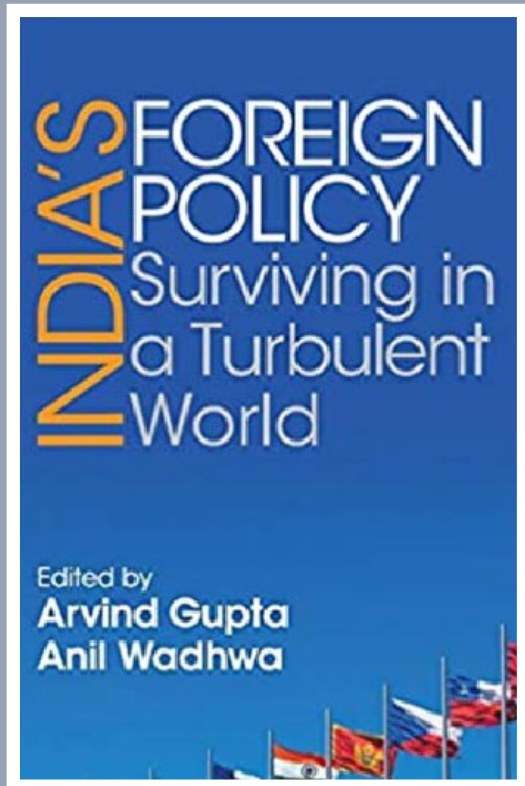


Publications

- Books
- Monographs
- Compendiums
- Papers
- Briefs
- Podcasts
- Reports
- National Security



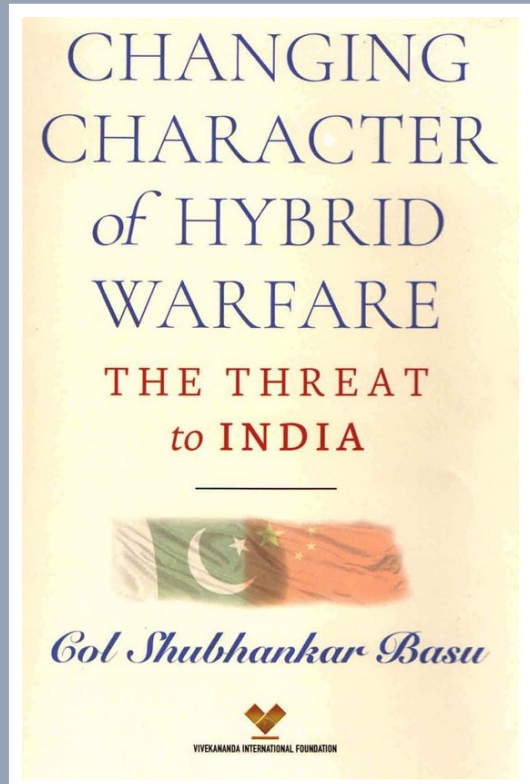
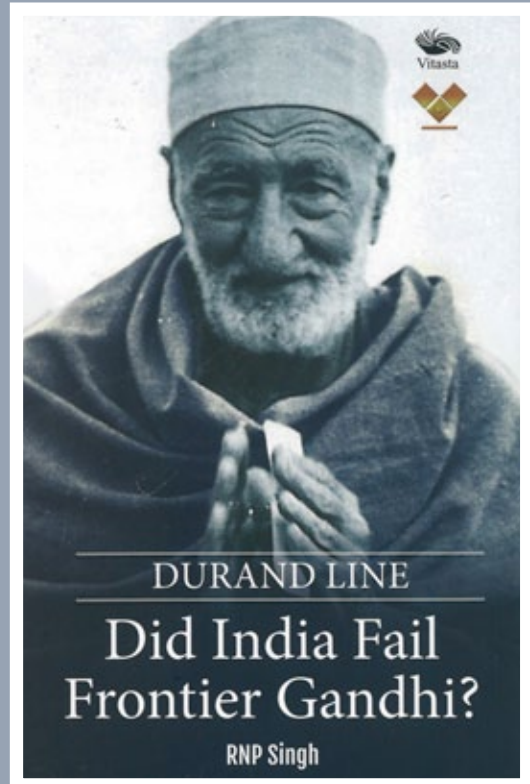
Following the success of Pakistan Insights 2019 that was based on discussions held in the Pakistan Study Group (PSG) of the Vivekananda International Foundation, it was decided to continue with the Insight series, making it an annual feature. Despite the constraints imposed by COVID-19, the PSG has met virtually and continued to discuss issues relating to Pakistan in a holistic manner, going beyond the headlines. Pakistan Insights 2020 is a comprehensive book that deals with most aspects of Pakistan. Articles include an overview of developments in 2019-20, internal developments and civil-military relations, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic challenges, the terrorism landscape, developments in J&K after the 05 August 2019 changes, Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, nuclear programme, defence production capabilities, and the digital landscape. The external section looks at Indo-Pak relations, Pakistan's relations with China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Malaysia and Russia as well as Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and the Afghan peace process. The book concludes with some thoughts on the future trajectory of Pakistan.

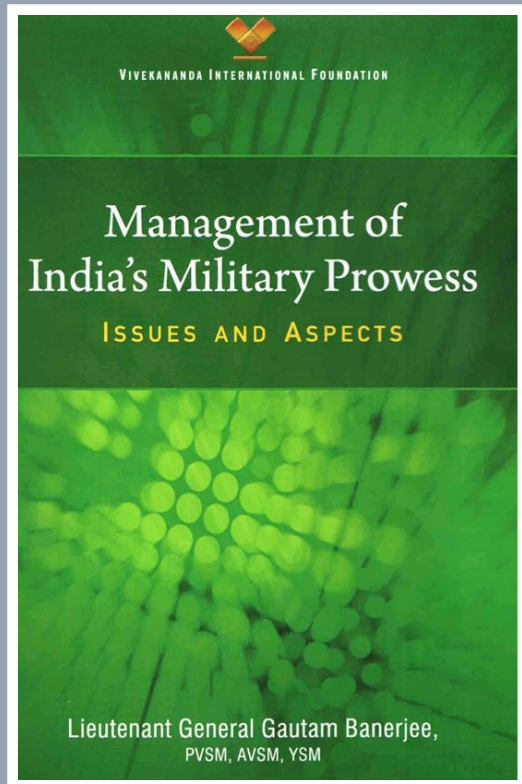


Written by foreign policy experts, academics and practioners, this book develops the frameworks and strategies for India's foreign policy that can be adopted to meet the emerging challenges and non-traditional threats in the new world order. It studies the important aspects of India's foreign policy in the present unsettled world order and comes up with strategies and policy suggestions. It raises several questions to highlight the future direction of foreign policy and the challenges that India may have to deal with in the coming years. The book covers the domestic dimension of the country's foreign policy, which is often missed out in policy discussions. It examines the close link between national security and foreign policy, and shows how foreign policy can be leveraged to strengthen the economy and make India a hub of innovation. This book emphasizes soft power strategies to ensure that a strategic approach to soft power projection is adopted.

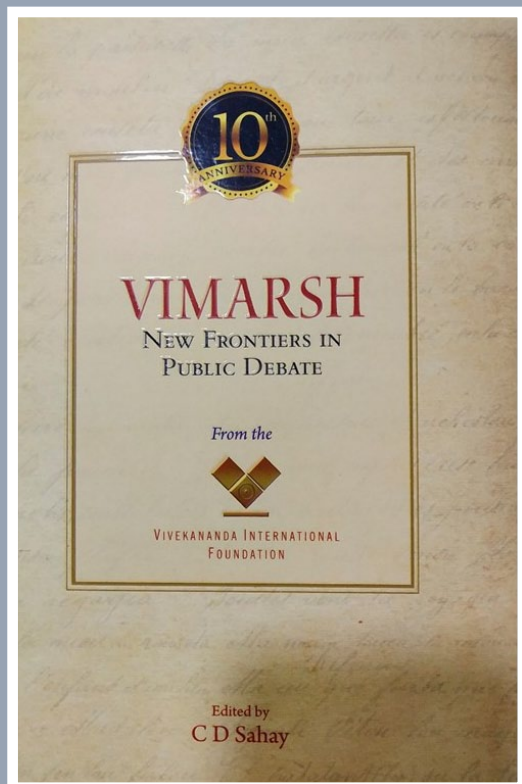
‘You have thrown us to the wolves!’ these words by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan will continue to haunt the nation for decades to come. In the story of India’s freedom struggle, he was one of the bravest. A martyr, yet he and his Pakhtun brothers were betrayed without a second thought. His dream of an undivided India was crushed when the Partition plan was accepted by the Congress without even consulting him. The newly formed Pakistan government considered him a traitor and threw him into jail several times, even in his old age, forcing him into exile in Afghanistan. Ghaffar Khan was a man who lived, sacrificed, suffered and died for his people. To his followers, he was their uncrowned king, ‘Badshah’ Khan, while the rest of the world will remember him as the ‘greatest non-violent soldier of Islam’. For those of the new generation, this book is an opportunity to revisit this chapter of India’s history and give this iconic son his due respect and love.

India’s security dilemmas are complex. The Indian Army Doctrine of 2018 defines ‘the collusive external threat from adversaries as well as the internal instability due to state/non-state sponsored proxy war’ as the primary security challenge to India. ‘Changing Character of Hybrid War: The Threat to India’ examines the transformation in hybrid warfare and analyses its threat to India. It begins with an analysis of the doctrine adopted by the US, Russia, China, UK & NATO in dealing with this threat. It illuminates the emerging characteristics of hybrid war by exploring certain case studies from major contemporary conflicts. India’s primary challenge in this area is of a collusive hybrid war from Pakistan and China. The book analyses the strategic culture of Pakistan Army and transformation of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to ascertain their views on hybrid warfare. The book will be of great interest for practitioners, analysts and is a must read for young officers in uniform to help them appreciate an important dimension of future warfare.





Conceptualising the foundations of national defence and organising a conformingly robust military structure is a humungous task of extreme complexities. There can be no right formulae, no right examples and no practice round to hone one's concepts and practices before the final, bloody and destructive showdown. Irreversibility of war further makes it a nightmare for military planners to guarantee success. At the best they can apply their professional insight to anticipate adverse situations, notionally replicate these and then harness tactical acumen to find possibly the most effective courses of actions to deal with the circumstances. It is here that the salience of various issues discussed in this book come into contention. The book does not offer formulae for the achievement of military success. Rather it offers an insight into the ingredients and processes that enable military planners to conceive the best possible force composition to win wars.



There is always a purpose, an objective and a target audience behind the exercise of writing and publishing any book. Measured against these classical parameters, the book on 'Vimarsh' might appear a bit different from the normal. Yes, it is so in many ways since it is a book that seeks to present before the readers a glimpse of the evolving thinking by experts in different fields on different critical aspects of India's growth story. That story is sought to be conveyed through a carefully compiled narrative emerging out of a series of public lectures delivered by eminent personalities on a variety of issues and subjects over a span of ten years commencing 2010 that marked the founding of Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF).

These lectures have been carefully converted into articles with minimal editing, ensuring that the essence of the speakers are retained in the narrative presented before the readers.

India's Act East Policy hinges on the development of the eight Northeast states with a view to achieve the foreign policy objective of enhancing ties with the neighbouring countries. This book examines large infrastructure development across the region as it is seen pivotal for growth, employment and opening up of the local economy. It assesses the potential of cross-border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh, some of which is a revival of traditional ties. It analyses how improving physical connectivity with the neighbours will establish direct linkages within the region and with the rest of India. It also gives an overview of government schemes and policies, investment fairs, tourism promotion efforts and the building of higher education institutions which will in due course transform the region. It is only when these come to fruition can the Northeast engage with the neighbours for prosperity in the region.

Commercial and military operations at sea and ashore across the globe are in the throes of technological and organisational transformation led by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies. These are impacting every aspect of the maritime industry necessitating 'up-skilling, reskilling and retooling'. Industry leaders recognize the importance of 4IR and are adopting innovative models for their operations. Likewise, techno-naval transformation led by 4IR technology is underway and several navies are developing new strengths to fight future wars. Great powers are investing in 4IR technologies and pursuing competitive national strategies with the goal of technological dominance, thus maintaining a favourable balance of power at the regional and global levels.

ACT EAST POLICY *and* NORTHEAST INDIA

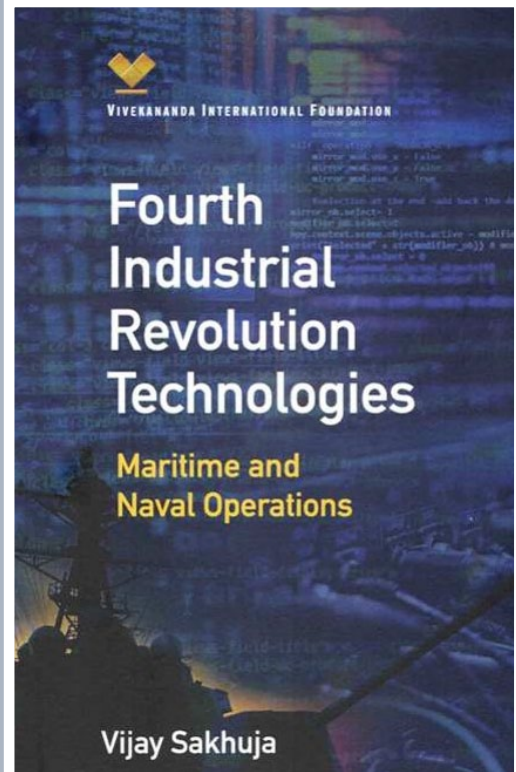
Sreeradha Datta

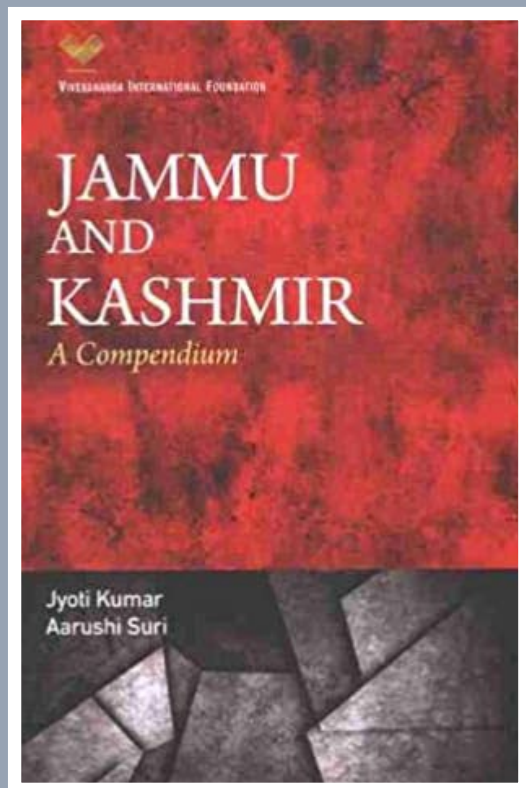


Fourth Industrial Revolution Technologies

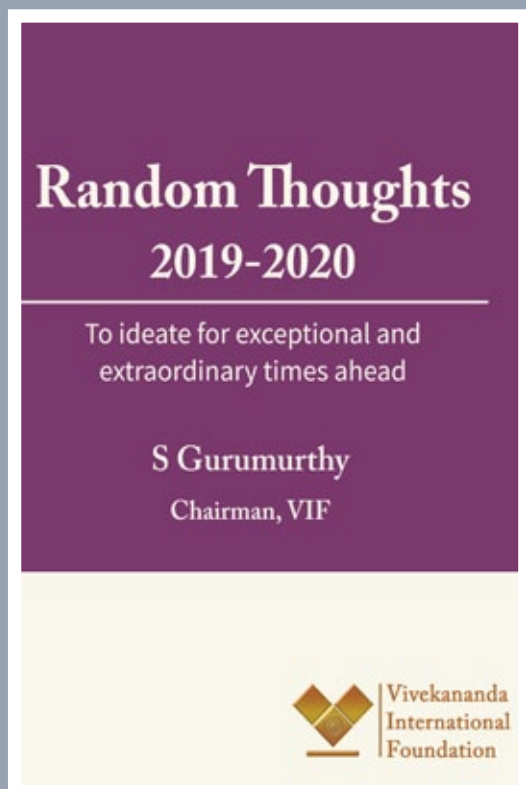
**Maritime and
Naval Operations**

Vijay Sakhuja





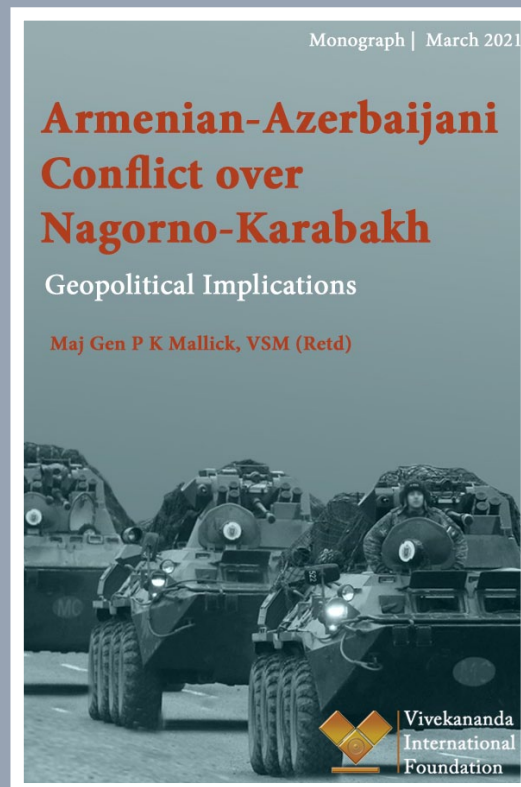
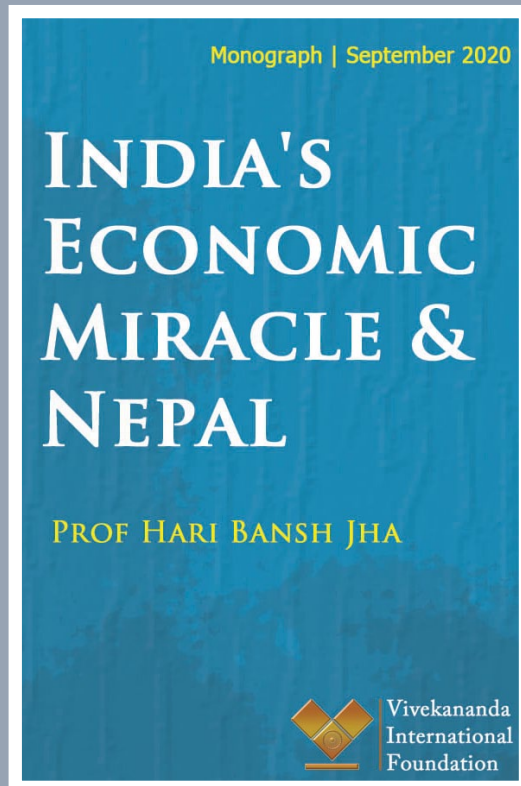
On August 5, 2019, the Indian Government decided to amend Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and usher the state into a new era of peace and development, paving the way for complete integration with the national mainstream. The compendium traces the history of Jammu & Kashmir since ancient times. It is an attempt to bring out the rich amalgamation of varied identities that exist within the state's population and presents evidences of its vivid and complex cultural and ethno-religious heritage. The compendium discusses Jammu & Kashmir's accession to India, its political history, Pakistan sponsored cross border terrorism over the years, radicalization of youth, confidence-building measures (CBMs) initiated by India, the amendment of article 370 and the current situation. The compendium is an excellent academic resource for both scholars of history, politics, terrorism, international relations and general readers alike.

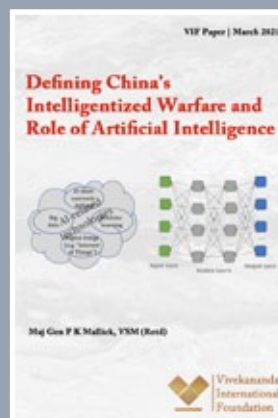
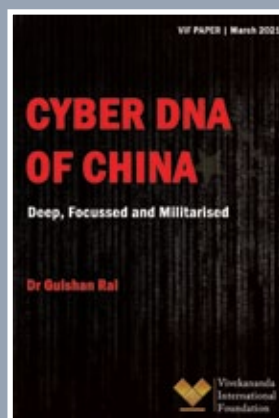
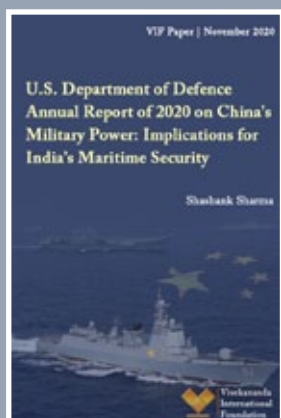
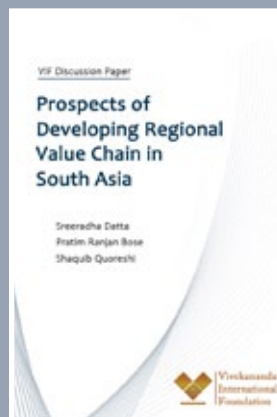
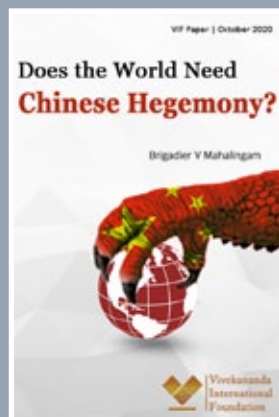
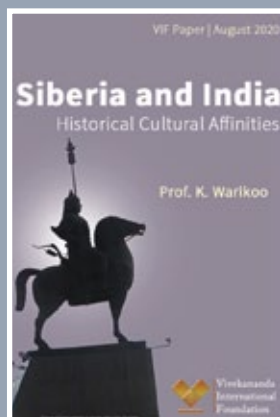
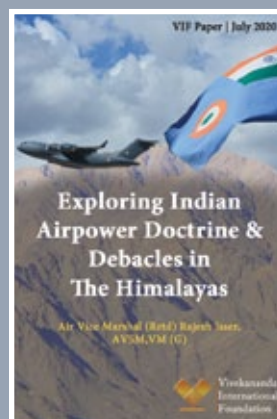
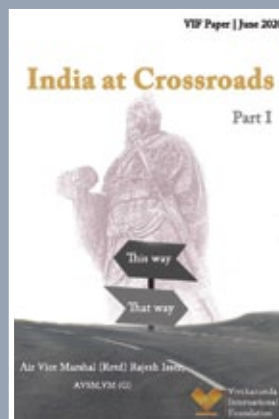


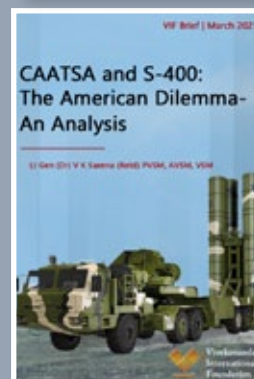
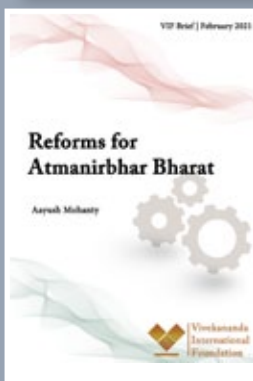
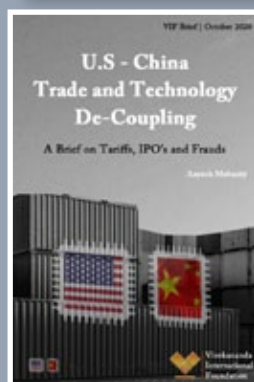
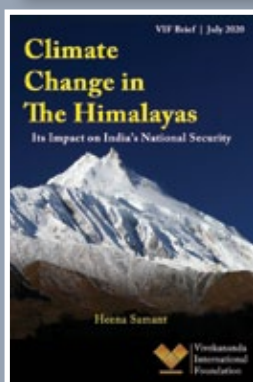
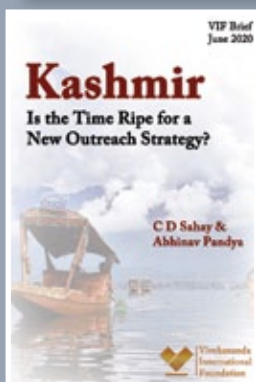
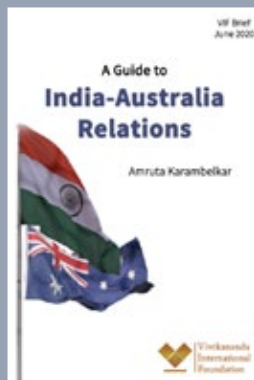
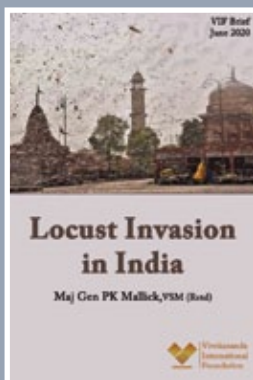
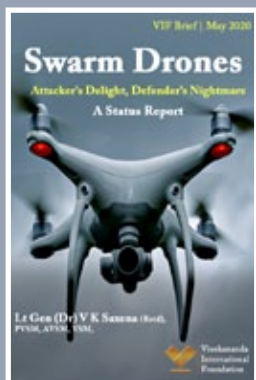
The scale, intensity and impact of the massive changes the world is witnessing now because of the Covid-19 phenomenon is unprecedented in human history, unthinkable any time before in the past and constitutes perhaps the greatest challenge to the future of humanity. But their immediate and long-term impact was far less than what one sees now, because the world then was far less integrated for the scale of devastation to be as widespread as it is in the world today that sees itself as a global village. India, which has one-sixth of the world's population, and which has, in the recent past acquired global stature, virtually had no role in the shaping of the contemporary world order. It calls for honest introspection as to where the world erred in the past and so does India have to contemplate on the changes and corrections likely and inevitable, desirable or not, in the contemporary world order, to strategise its role in the framing and shaping of a new world order.

The book “India’s Economic Miracle and Nepal” reiterates the time-tested view that no two countries of the world are as close to each other, particularly at the people-to-people level, as Nepal and India. The relationship between both countries in the socio-cultural, economic, political and spiritual spheres is well known. In this book the author convincingly builds the argument that Nepal has tremendous scope to modernise and develop its economy, drawing from the miraculous economic growth that India has achieved over the years. As a fast emerging major economic power centre in the world, India has many things in common with Nepal, which in turn provides a larger platform for cooperation and collaboration between the two on several development-related fronts. This is also due to the open border that both nations share and have maintained since time immemorial.

The geostrategic sensitive region of region of Nagorno-Karabakh lies at an intersection of political, ethnic and religious borders of Iran, Turkey, Russia and Georgia. On September 27, 2020 the war broke out with Azerbaijan launching an offensive retake Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding previously Azerbaijani-populated regions. The war was won by Azerbaijan. Russia brokered a peace deal with Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a Russian-mediated settlement to end the six-week war. The cease-fire is seen as a victory in Azerbaijan and as a capitulation in Armenia. Russia’s leading role in stopping the fighting also shows that Moscow continues to be the most influential player in the southern Caucasus. This monograph provides the background of the conflict, its geopolitical dimensions, details of the cease fire deal and the role of different stakeholders in this conflict.







Podcast



Current Security Scenario in Afghanistan

6 November 2020

Are you intrigued by the intricacies of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan? Join Dr Yatharth Kachia and Lt Gen Ravi Sawhney as they delve into the intrigue and complexities of the peace process in Afghanistan.



Lt General R K Sawhney, PVSM, AVSM
Centre Head & Senior Fellow, National Security and Strategic Studies & Internal Security Studies, VIF



Podcast



Developments in West Asia

15 January 2021

Join Amb. Anil Trigunayath and Hiral Jyoti Das as they discuss the US role in West Asia, inter-Gulf tensions and India's options.



Amb Anil Trigunayath
Distinguished Fellow, VIF



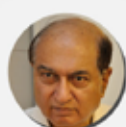
Podcast



China-Pakistan Nexus

19 January 2021

Join Amb G. Parthasarathy and Dr Tejas Singh for an extensive discussion on the China-Pakistan Nexus.



Amb G Parthasarathy
(Former Diplomat and Author)



Podcast



Implications of Migration of the Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir

19 January 2021

*Started in January 1990, the forced exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, also referred to Kashmiri Pandits, from Kashmir was an "evil strategy" of Pakistan's "thousand year" doctrine against India. Join Lt Gen Syed Asa Hameed and Anurag Sharma as they recall the event and discuss the way forward to the developments, along with the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their respective homes in J&K.



Lt General S A Hameed,
PVSM, UTM, AVSM, SM (SM), VSM (SM),
Distinguished Fellow, VIF
Former GOC 18 Corps & Military Secretary



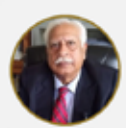
Podcast



China's Domestic and Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping

23 January 2021

Join Mr Jayadeva Ranade and Dr Tejas Singh as they discuss the internal situation in China, Chinese Economy, US-China Relations and India-China Relations



Jayadeva Ranade
Member, National Security Advisory Board
and President of the Centre for China Analysis
and Strategy



Podcast



Political Crises in Myanmar

3 February 2021

01 February 2021, the Myanmar military declared a state of emergency for a year and arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and other government officials. The coup's timings have been critical as 01 February was supposed to be the first session of Parliament. Join Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyaya and Ma Chawt Vaishe for insightful views on the recent political crises in Myanmar.



Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyaya
Former Diplomat



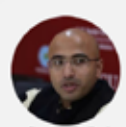
Podcast



Chinese Economy and India-China Economic Relations

18 February 2021

Join Mr Santosh Pai and Dr Tejas Singh as they unfold the developments of Chinese Economy and India-China Economic Relations.



Santosh Pai
International lawyer, partner with Link Legal India Law Services who advises Chinese and Taiwanese clients on Indian legal issues



Podcast



Joe Biden Presidency and West Asia

19 February 2021

Join Amb. Anil Trigunayath and Hiral Jyoti Das unfold the current developments and upcoming trends in the West Asian region in light of the Joe Biden Presidency.



Amb Anil Trigunayath
Distinguished Fellow, VIF



Podcast



Developments in Xinjiang

25 February 2021

Join Prof Srikanth Kondapalli and Dr Tesbu Singh as they review the developments in Xinjiang



Prof Srikanth Kondapalli
Ph.D. Professor in Chinese Studies
Centre for East Asian Studies, JNU



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



An Update on Political Situation in Myanmar

4 March 2021

Join Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyay and Ms Chavvi Vasishth talk about the latest updates on the political situation in Myanmar and international reactions.



Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyay
Former Diplomat



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



LoC Ceasefire

7 March 2021

As a positive step, on 24-25 February 2021, the Director General of the Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC). Since 2018, a total of 12,949 incidents of Ceasefire Violations (CFV) by Pakistan along the LoC, since 2018, destroyed several homes, schools, and infrastructure on both sides of the border. To discuss the recent developments on the Ceasefire Agreement with us, we are honored to have Lt Gen Jyoti Anu Hasnain, Distinguished Fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation & former GOC of 15 Corps, Indian Army.



Lt General S A Hasnain
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM (Ret), VSM (Ret),
Distinguished Fellow, VIF
Former GOC 15 Corps & Military Secretary



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



US Foreign Policy under Joe Biden

10 March 2021

On March 3rd, the new Biden administration released an Interim National Security Strategy Guidance to convey how the US would engage with the world as it begins its work on the National Security Strategy. As the new administration takes such first steps towards charting its foreign policy priorities, join Amb Arun K Singh and Dr. Himani Pant for a discussion on the broad contours of the US foreign policy under Joe Biden.



Amb. Arun K Singh
Former Ambassador to the
US, France and Israel



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



Central Asia: Three Decades of Developments

12 March 2021

Central Asia, located between the East and the West has always been seen at the centre of power struggle between major powers such as Russia, China, US and West. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leaders of these independent republics, adopted multi vector foreign policies to balance these major powers. As this year marks the three decades of the break of the Soviet Union, join Amb D. P. Srivastava and Dr. Praveesh Kumar Gupta for a discussion on the developments in Central Asia region in these three decades.



Amb D P Srivastava
Distinguished Fellow, VIF



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



Use of Airpower in 'No War No Peace' Scenario

15 March 2021

A ceasefire along the LOC came into being between India and Pakistan on 26 February coinciding with the second anniversary of airstrikes by India at Balakot in response to the suicide bombing attack on a police convoy in Pulwama, Kashmir. Join Air Marshal Anil Khosla (Retd) and Shashank Sharma as they probe the opening of this new paradigm of use of Airpower in a No War No Peace scenario.



Air Marshal Anil Khosla,
PVSM, AVSM, VM (Retd)



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



Pakistan's Internal Developments

22 March 2021

The past few weeks saw some interesting developments in Pakistan. Join Mr Tilak Devasher and Akshiti Vinayak as they discuss the internal developments in Pakistan in the background of the recent senate elections and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) retaining Pakistan on its grey list.



Tilak Devasher
Member National Security Advisory
Board, GOI & Consultant, VIF



Vivekananda
International
Foundation

Podcast



Japan's Strategic Outlook in the Indo-Pacific

17 March 2021

Japan is the pioneer of the Indo-Pacific construct. India and Japan are close partners in the Indo-Pacific. Join Ms. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa and Amruta Karambelkar as they discuss Japanese foreign policy & its security interests in the Indo-Pacific.



Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa
Former Indian Ambassador to Japan



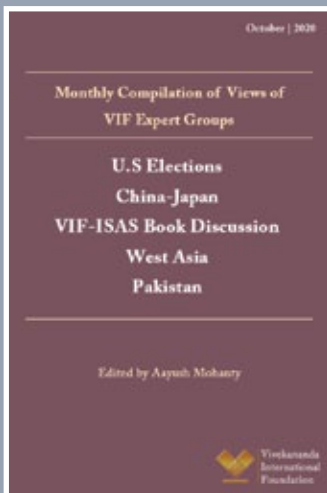
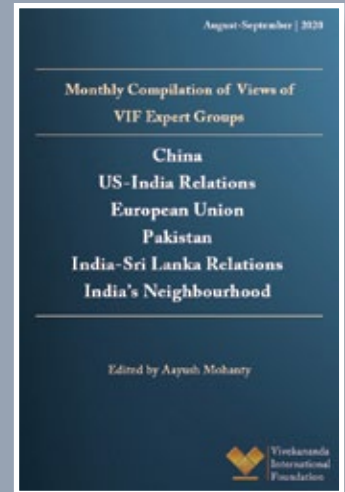
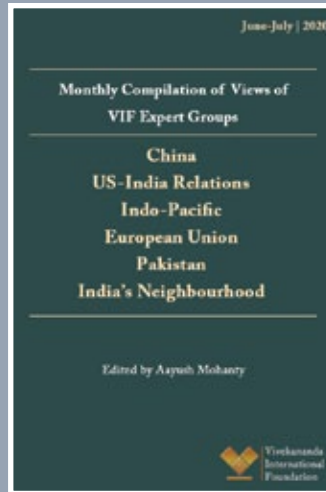
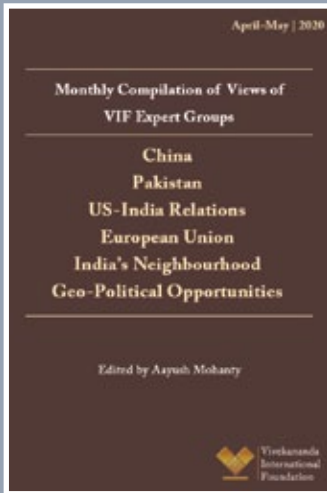
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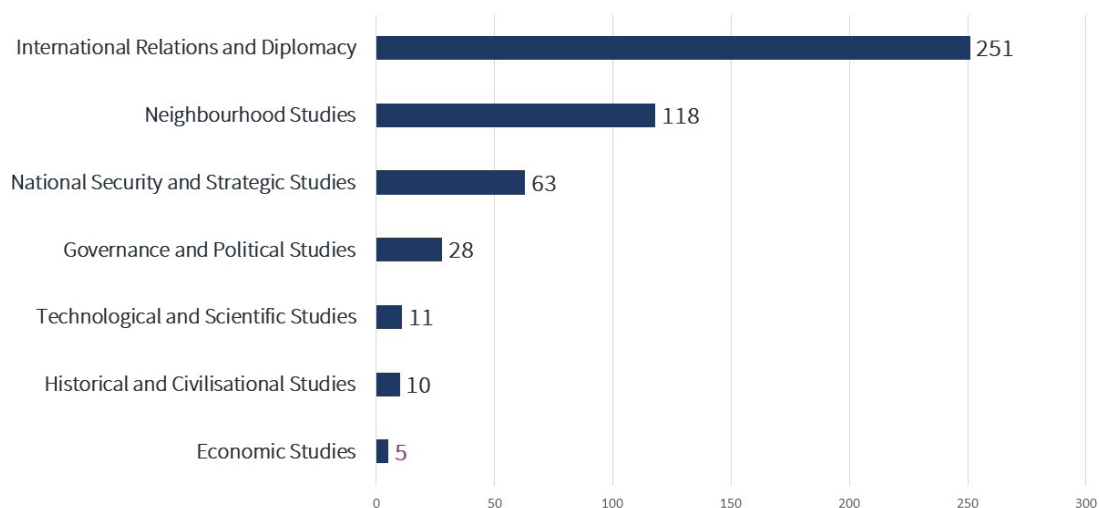
Left-wing extremism, also called Naxalism, or Maoism has been around since the late 60s. After 60 years, the movement may be down but is not out. In the last few years, the government has been proactive in dealing with the Naxalist violence. A judicious mix of security and developmental measures have put considerable pressure on the movement. According to government figures, there has been a significant decline in Maoist violence since 2014. As compared to 1089 incidents of violence in 2015, only 67 were reported in 2019. The footprint of Naxalism has sharply reduced from 90 districts in 2014 to 34 districts in 2019. Yet, it cannot be denied that the movement may be down but it is not out.



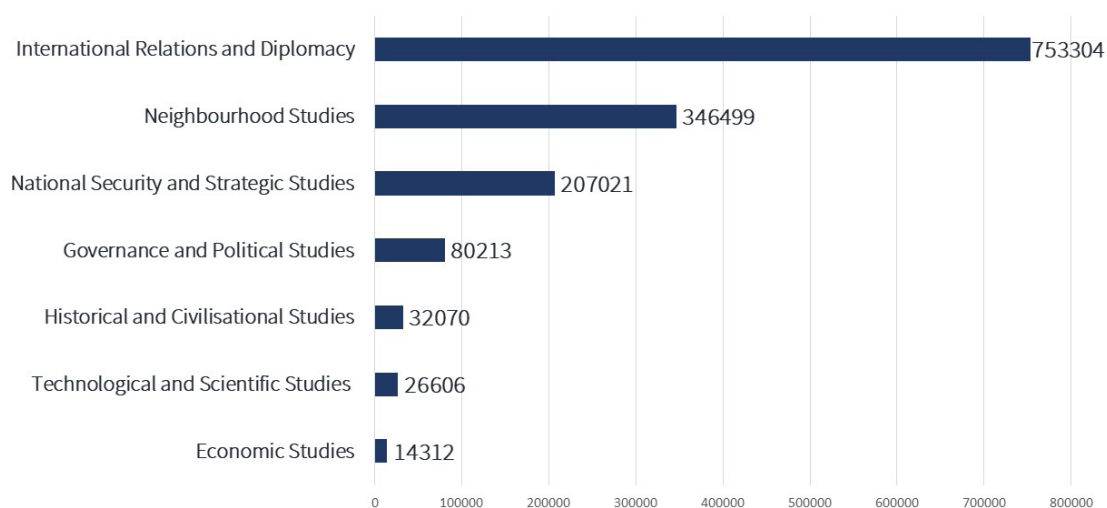
India is at the cusp of metamorphosing from a regional player to one with global clout. As India's geo-political and economic ambitions grow, it needs to develop robust indigenous manufacturing capabilities and ecosystem to secure its ambition for self-reliance in the Aerospace and Defence industry. That we are the only importer of arms amongst global powers, must act as a dampener and reality check for our leaders as no nation in history has ever earned respect, safeguarded its freedom and unyoked its foreign policy on the strength of imported arms and ammunition. The rapidly changing regional and global security challenges have forced countries across the world to rethink their defence strategies and plans. Tapping its globally recognised scientific and engineering talent and harnessing it for indigenisation led, modernisation of armed forces needs to be made a top priority for the government. It is clear from the ongoing arguments that India has to pull out all stops to attain its stated but not successfully pursued goal of developing indigenous defence capability.



Number of VIF Publications per centre of study



VIF Publications: views & downloads





VIF launched its flagship quarterly policy journal, National Security, in August 2018. This is the fourth year of its publication. It was published online till 2020, however since January 2021 it is being published in print format along with the online version. The journal covers contributions by top experts on both traditional and non-traditional security issues confronting India and the world. The publication is a platform for contributors to discuss the complex security challenges before India and articulate new ideas on how to resolve and confront them. Distinguished policymakers and academics from India and abroad contribute to the journal.

In recent years, the global order has become increasingly fragile because of growing distrust and uncertainty in great power relations. At a time when Megatrends such as climate change, explosion of disruptive technologies, and global health crisis caused by the spread of viruses such as COVID-19 are devastating the old order and its institutions and demand maximum international cooperation, the trends are towards less collaboration and enhanced strategic competition.

April - June 2020 | Special Issue: The Nuclear Challenge

The global political arrangements to manage threats have been battered and weakened. Nowhere is the impact felt more than in the unravelling of the nuclear order. The impact can be witnessed in the surge in the nuclear arms race, the breakdown of arms control, and the setbacks to non-proliferation. The April-June 2020 issue was devoted to the theme 'The Nuclear Challenge' and focused on rising nuclear dangers, strategic competition and the crisis in arms control, and the implications for India's security and doctrines.

July-September 2020| General Issue with focus on Human Security

In the context of the Corona pandemic's overwhelming impact, it has become evident that the international system cannot be run in the existing manner. Total globalisation and continuous material growth without considering in value terms their impact on environment, health, urban habitation, and the welfare of labour has become unsustainable. States need new principles to create strong internal capacities to prevent such extreme health crises and global supply chains need to be diversified. The world simultaneously faces a major geopolitical crisis as a result of the rise of an authoritarian, jingoistic and

expansionist China determined to dominate Asia and the international system. This deadly confluence of the two threats – both originating in China -- is a reminder of the 1919-39 period when a similar pandemic had killed millions, weakened democracies, contributed to the onset of economic depression and given rise to a nationalist and expansionist Germany, and a devastating global war. A new global partnership, especially of leading democracies, has become essential.

Centred primarily around the Corona pandemic, July-September 2020 Issue of National Security carried three contributions from subject experts that examined the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian economy, human security and national strategy. The Issue also covered important contributions on new trends in India-Russia collaboration in Eurasia, the Libyan crisis and the extensive use of the internet and the media by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. These are all valuable and highly relevant contributions.

October - December 2020 | General Issue with focus on post-Covid Order

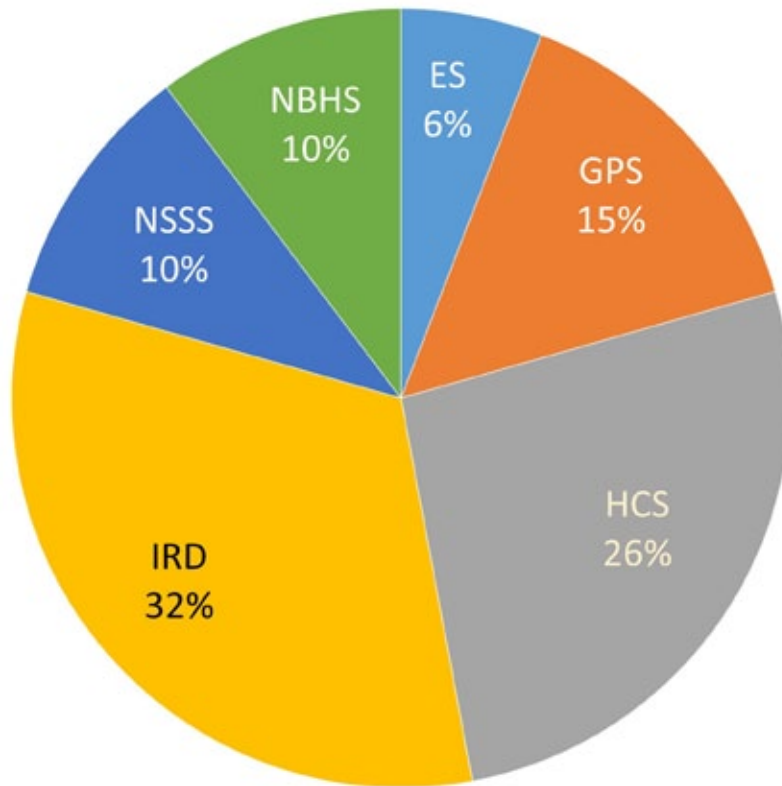
The twin threats posed by the spread of the Covid-19 virus and the open hostilities and military build-up by an aggressive and expansionist China in Ladakh have remained the focus of national headlines over the past year in India. No other country currently, and rarely, faces such a combination of threats that span across the military to the human security domains. These are perilous times that the country is going through and the government has confidently attempted to grapple with the rising challenges. India's security, economic and foreign policies are as a result undergoing unprecedented changes.

The October-December 2020 issue of National Security analysed the challenges and the policy responses to the above-mentioned scenarios from diverse. Director VIF, in his essay argues that multilateralism is facing an extraordinary crisis as a result of great power rivalry and politicization of global institutions. He underlines the culpability of China in covering up and delaying reporting of the virus and the uncritical support it received from the World Health Organization (WHO), as being the principal reasons for keeping the international community unprepared to deal with the rapid spread of the virus. The other contributions dealt with critical issues that have come to the fore as a result of the effects of the Covid-19 virus on health, urban life, employment, incomes, and migration.

January – March 2021| Special Issue on India-Civilization, Identity

National security is a broad concept that goes beyond the narrow confines of military security and embraces issues related to a wide gamut of traditional and non-traditional threats. The January-March 2021 issue of National Security was dedicated to the theme 'India: History, Civilization and Identity', which has a bearing on the ideological and ideational threats to national security. History is inseparably related to the making of community identity, and in modern times, to the making of the nation itself. The special Issue delineates the various issues at stake when we discuss history and historiography in the context of national security in India. This Issue with a total of 3 essays, 3 articles and 2 book reviews, addressed several dimensions of Indian history, starting from national identity to historiography to the protection of Indian heritage, that have a bearing on India's national security.

Activities held as per centres of Study



 IRD - International Relations and Diplomacy

 GPS - Governance and Political Studies

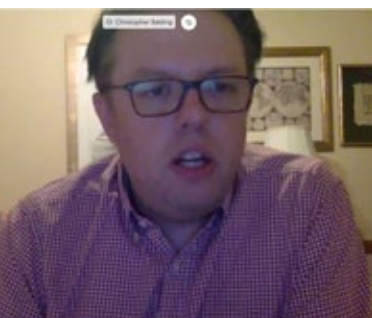
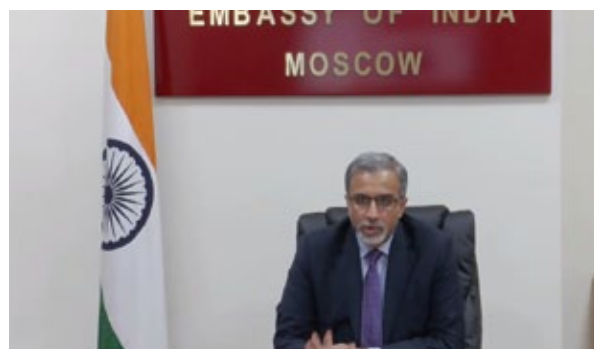
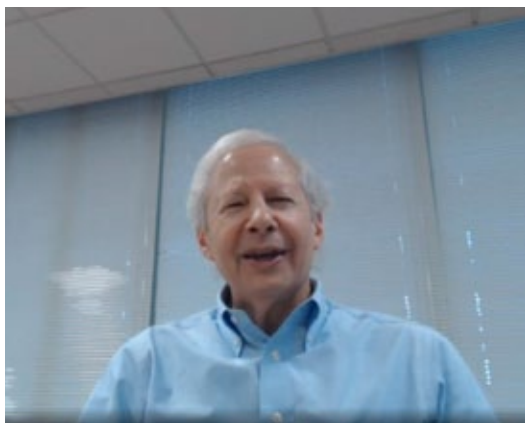
 HCS - Historical and Civilisational Studies

 NSSS - National Security and Strategic Studies

 NBHS - Neighbourhood Studies

 ES - Economic Studies





International Relations & Diplomacy

Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy

UK

- **19 March 2021:** IISS-VIF webinar on The UK's Integrated Review: Implications for India

France

- **21 May 2020:** Interaction with H.E. Mr. Emanuel Lenain, Ambassador of France
- **7 January 2021:** Talk by H.E. Amb. Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President

Europe

- **22 May 2020:** European Union's post COVID-19 Trajectory- the Challenges Ahead

Armenia

- **24 April 2020:** Interaction on the Armenian Genocide: History and Perspective

USA

- **28 May 2020:** Significance & Potential of Indo-US Relations in the Post-Covid World: Interaction with Amb. Kenneth Juster
- **2 June 2020:** Joint VIF-Heritage Interaction on Future Trajectory of Indo-US Relations
- **19 November 2020:** Quad Plus Dialogue

West Asia

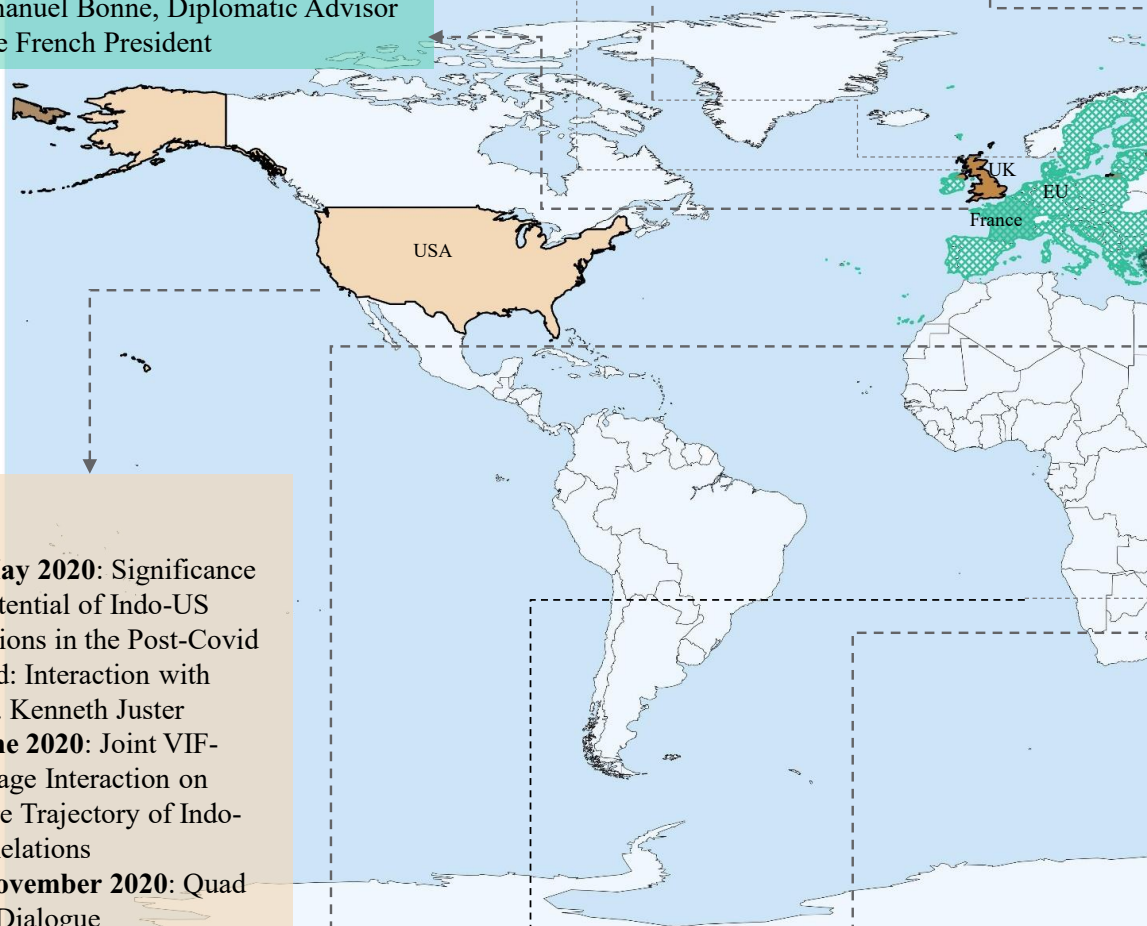
- **7 May 2020:** Developments in West Asia
- **13 July 2020:** Developments in West Asia

Afghanistan

- **9 October 2020 :** Webinar on International North South Transport Corridor

South Asia

- **18 May 2020:** Discussion on Post COVID-19: India and the South Asian Neighbourhood
- **9 July 2020:** Discussion on India, China and South Asian Neighbours
- **24 July 2020:** Possibility of Developing Regional Value Chain in South Asia



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Map by : Jyothy Nair

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Iran

- **29 September 2020:** Discussion on Iran: US Sanctions and Regional and International Perspectives
- **9 October 2020** - Webinar on International North South Transport Corridor

Central Asia

- **9 October 2020** - Webinar on International North South Transport Corridor

Russia

- **9 October 2020** - Webinar on International North South Transport Corridor

Uzbekistan

- **4 December 2020:** VIF Webinar on Indo-Uzbek Relations

Japan

- **29 June 2020:** Interaction with Ambassador of Japan to India, H.E. Mr. Satoshi Suzuki
- **19 November 2020:** Quad Plus Dialogue

Taiwan

- **18 June 2020:** VIF - Prospect Foundation Interaction

China

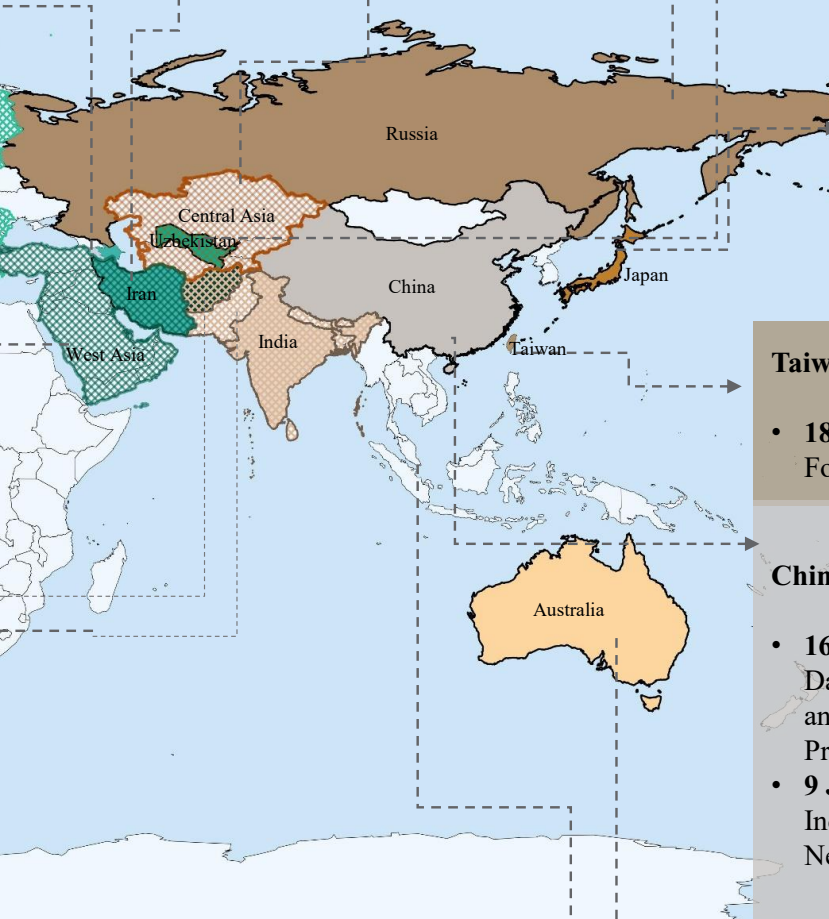
- **16 October 2020:** Chinese Data Collection- Domestically and Internationally - A talk by Professor Christopher Balding
- **9 July 2020:** Discussion on India, China and South Asian Neighbours

Australia

- **17 June 2020:** Interaction with H.E. Mr. Barry O'Farrell, High Commissioner of Australia to India
- **19 November 2020:** Quad Plus Dialogue
- **4 November 2020:** Strategic dialogue VIF-Australian National University

Singapore

- **19 November 2020:** Quad Plus Dialogue



Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region saw several important developments in the last one year. The cluster at VIF followed these developments closely. The major events were the COVID-19 pandemic, how it affected the region, China's role and conduct, China's relations with regional countries, China's aggression in the South China Sea, India-China border standoff, change in India's China policy, elevation of QUAD to summit level, expansion of Ex. Malabar, Supply-Chain Resilience Initiative, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, developments in Southeast Asia and West Asia, European interest in the Indo-Pacific, the VIF cluster focused on all these issues through publications, expert group meetings and programmes. The major focus was on China, and the QUAD.

The cluster virtually hosted heads of missions in New Delhi from all the QUAD countries, and also from France. The interactions focused on the respective countries' policy toward China, the Indo-Pacific, and maritime security. The cluster has also begun to record podcasts with leading experts.

United States

2020 was a crucial year in the U.S. due to the Presidential election. Amid the domestic polarisation and Covid-19 pandemic, the country went through an administration change which has important domestic and global implications. To deliberate on all these aspects, the U.S. cluster organised regular round table discussions, seminars and conferences throughout the year. This was done under the aegis of the US Experts Group- an initiative by the VIF to deliberate on topical issues

in US: domestic and foreign policy. The Group includes former diplomats, senior defence officers, representatives from academia, various think tanks and industry.

The Group met on a monthly basis virtually and deliberated on a wide range of issues including the US Presidential Election, US-India ties; US, European and Transatlantic Responses to the China Challenge, US- China and Indo Pacific, Quadrilateral Dialogue etc. The Group hosted several experts from US think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the German Marshall Fund of the US. Reports of all these meetings were published on a regular basis.

The cluster also continued to publish fortnightly news digests, and commentaries.

Europe

The year was full of crucial developments in Europe. Issues like Brexit, migration were further compounded by the spread of Covid-19 in the continent. The VIF cluster on Europe continued to track these developments and organised virtual round table discussions on a regular basis throughout the year. In order to create more awareness about Indo-European issues and relationship, the VIF organised the first meeting of its newly constituted Europe Expert Group on February 4, 2021. The Group meets on a monthly basis to deliberate on the themes around developments in Europe/EU and its implications for India. The cluster regularly comes out with fortnightly news digest & commentaries. The

China & Taiwan

Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, the developments in China were the major highlights of the world order. Also, 2020 was a watershed in India-China relations, the developments in Galwan valley has become an anomaly in bilateral relations. To make an in-depth analysis of these developments, the China Cluster at the VIF organized several discussions.

The China Experts Group meeting at VIF discussed pertinent issues at length. The issues covered were; Xi Jinping and China's Domestic Politics, China's experience in the resumption of economic activities post COVID-19, India's economic engagement with China in response to Chinese aggression along with the impact of COVID-19 on One Belt One Road (OBOR), China-Russia Relations: Implications for India, Japan-China Relations: Legacies of Shinzo Abe, the highlights of the Fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC): Implications for the Region and India. The cluster also organized a discussion on the book "India's China Challenge: A journey through China's Rise and what it means for India" authored by Ananth Krishnan.

The cluster also followed the developments in Taiwan. It held three virtual interactions with the Prospects Foundation on the US-China Decoupling, Rationale Behind the Chinese Aggressiveness in the South China Sea, India-China Border and Taiwan and Impact of the Pandemic on India-Taiwan Economic and Science and Technology Collaboration/Engagement, India-Taiwan Relations, Prospect for Economic Cooperation Agreement

and Cyber-security: Experiences in India and Taiwan and prospect for cooperation, India-China Relations amid the Galwan Stand-off. The cluster regularly came out with topical commentaries, briefs and papers on the internal and external developments of China.

West Asia

The West Asia Cluster at the VIF is committed to in-depth research and analysis of political, strategic, economic developments in the region and compliment India's 'Think West' Policy. The VIF in 2020-2021 while facing certain limitations due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to undertake academic and research pursuits; organised series of interactions and engaged with academicians, diplomats, journalists, political and security experts and representatives from the West Asian states. The area of focus were India's policy options and diplomatic engagements with the region; impact of COVID-19 pandemic and implications on the India's strategic and energy relations; trade and diaspora; investment commitments between India and GCC states; role of global and regional actors in regional conflicts; Israel-Palestine conflict; Abraham Accords; Syrian crisis etc.

The Cluster published monthly round ups of the major developments in the region between April 2019 and March 2020. The Cluster has also imitated podcasts since January 2021.

The states in the West Asian region prior to the COVID-19 pandemic were facing challenges such as crisis of political legitimacy, intra-regional rivalry, sectarian tensions, radicalisation, terrorism and a

downturn in oil prices etc. Geopolitically, the three major regional conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya have remained unresolved. The diplomatic opening between Israel and few Arab states as well as the rapprochement between Qatar and Saudi Arabia requires further attention.

The West Asian region as well as India is currently facing similar non-traditional security threats arising from the COVID-19 pandemic which would have long-term ramifications on the political, economic, strategic and diplomatic spheres. India's interests in the region are multi-layered including energy, trade, security, diaspora and remittances. In the post-COVID 19 context, the region would be crucial for India's economic rehabilitation. Moreover, the subject of energy will continue to remain relevant for India. Therefore, a close monitoring and in-depth analysis of the region would be pertinent to serve India's vital interests. The Cluster would further enrich the database on India's maritime networks in Western Indian Ocean Region as well as continue to focus on diaspora and the scope of remittances; investments; trade; energy contracts and strategic cooperation. The Cluster would also seek to explore on India's role in reconstruction process in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine.

Central Asia

From late 2019 to the date, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the socio-economic and political developments globally. The Year 2020 remained challenging not only for India but also for Central Asian countries. The pandemic turned out to be a litmus test for the already troubled economies of Central Asia.

However, in the absence of physical interaction, both India and Central Asia continued the bilateral and multilateral engagements through digital initiatives. India also extended humanitarian and medical assistance to the Central Asian republics. Despite the pandemic, the consistency in the bilateral relations has given boost to the India's outreach to Central Asia.

The domestic developments in Central Asia, role of Russia and China and India-Central Asia relations have been the major focus of the study of VIF's Central Asian cluster. Many articles focusing on the Chinese interests in Central Asia and how China is perceived in these countries have been published. Domestic developments in Central Asia have been a major focus of research of Central Asia cluster at VIF. A monograph on India-Central Asia relations is in progress.

Connectivity remains a major challenge for India- Central Asia relations. VIF webinar on INSTC and India-Uzbekistan relations came out with some valuable suggestions to eradicate these barriers. COVID-19 and its impact on Central Asia has been highlighted in many articles at VIF.

Major Events at a Glance

24 April 2020: Interaction on the Armenian Genocide: History and Perspective

This was a virtual interactive discussion organised on the 105th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Amb. Armen Martirosyan,

Ambassador to India, Dr. Suren Manukyan, Visiting Lecturer at the American University of Armenia, Dr. Suman Keshari, Social Activist, and Prof. Ashwini Mahapatra, Centre for West Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, besides many other scholars participated.

A combination of foreign interference, ethnic differences, economic envy, exclusive nationalism and fostering Turkish political and social dominance were identified as the causes of the genocide. Turkey's denial of the genocide was seen in terms of identity dilemma stemming from the artificial nature of the Turkish state.

7 May 2020: Discussions on West Asia

In two sets of interactive discussions on the impact of COVID-19 in West Asia and its implications on India, Amb. D P Srivastava spoke on 'Geopolitics and Return of Indian Workers from the Gulf' while Amb. Anil Trigunayat spoke on 'Developments in West Asia and impact on India'. It was noted that with prevalence of serious political-social volatility, and exacerbated by economic downturn and lack of health care, public dissatisfaction with the regimes may increase after COVID-19 pandemic is contained. Therefore, crisis in political legitimacy against the ruling regimes is likely to grow and the possibility of Arab Spring 2.0 cannot be ruled out. As India's most crucial extended neighbourhood, such negative developments directly affects India, India's strategic petroleum reserves, scope for mutual investments and employment of nine million Indian diaspora being the key concerns.

Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman, opined that internal developments within the West Asian

states would continue to affect India's strategic interests. But India could still derive leverage from these developments due their reliance on China and India for economic recovery.

21 May 2020: Interaction with H.E. Mr. Emanuel Lenain, Ambassador of France to India

As global response to Covid-19 has demonstrated, the advocates of internationalism were forced to look inwards. To deliberate on the altered post COVID-19 world order and future Indo-French cooperation, a virtual discussion was organised with the French ambassador H. E. Mr. Emanuel Lenain, with distinguished diplomats and researcher in attendance. Five priorities for Indo-French cooperation were identified as: impetus on multilateral system; free and stable Indo-Pacific; new threats against security of data, space, supercomputing and artificial intelligence; restoration of human exchanges; and, environment protection. The conclusion was that dialogue and cooperation in these domains present opportunities to strengthen Indo-French cooperation.

22 May 2020: European Union's post COVID-19 Trajectory- the Challenges Ahead

Besides the crises over its supranational entity, EU's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic has been under the scanner. To deliberate upon the future of EU's relationship with India in light of these new challenges a virtual brainstorming session was organized with saw participation of senior members of the VIF faculty. Several palpable

trends shaping the post COVID-19 EU were observed: adverse impacts of border restrictions; chinks in healthcare system; easier migration rules for selected sectors and greater regulation for others; withdrawal from some offshore productions; rise of internal differences due to different levels of economic prosperity and threat perceptions; engagement with China, Russia the US; and, Franco-German solidarity in post-Brexit European recovery. So far as India-EU partnership is concerned, it was inferred that there is a need to identify a new narrative that goes beyond the stalled trade deals to focus on other viable areas like health, research and education, environment and climate change, cyber security, etc, which elicit mutual benefits.

28 May 2020: Potential of Indo-US Relations in the Post-Covid World

In an interaction session, H.E. Mr. Kenneth Juster, US Ambassador spoke about the evolving geopolitical scenario in a post-Pandemic world, and the crucial position that US-India strategic partnership occupies in it. A select group of veteran diplomats and bureaucrats engaged in the deliberations. In the discussion, progress on military cooperation, architecture for a free-and-open Indo-Pacific region especially to counter an increasingly aggressive China, need for modified globalization based on mutual dependence, complementarity, purposeful convergence between trusted partners, enhancing economic collaboration and coproduction of defence equipment were reiterated as crucial objectives in Indo-US relations.

29 May 2020: Geopolitical Dynamics of the Post COVID-19 World

A discussion on 'Geopolitical Dynamics of the Post Covid-19 World', moderated by Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, and with Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain, Amb. Kanwal Sibal and Dr. Sanjaya Baru as panelists was held, followed by an open house Q&A session. The issues delved into were: balance of power and a new world order; the China's challenges to the established order; fallouts of developments in the Middle East; strengthening India-US-Japan strategic relationship and the Quad, featuring Russia in India's foreign policy; nurturing neighbourhood alliances; guarding against intrusive and restrictive technology transfer; and, buildup of strategic oil reserves.

2 June 2020: Joint VIF-Heritage Foundation Interaction on Future Trajectory of Indo-US Relations

A joint interaction was organized to deliberate upon the future trajectory of Indo-US relationship in the post-COVID era. The discussion centered around three major themes: (i) US-China Decoupling and its Implications on the Global Economy; (ii) Impact of Covid-19 in further Enhancing the India-US Partnership in all fields; and (iii) US Concept of a Second Marshall Plan. While Dr. Arvind Gupta, Amb. Kanwal Sibal, Amb. Ashok Kantha and Amb. Arun K. Singh made presentations on behalf of the VIF the Heritage Foundation was represented by Dr. James Carafano, Mr. Riley Walters, Mr. Dean Cheng and Dr. Jeff. M. Smith.

The discussion stressed the need for forging a Multinational Economic Recovery Partnership based on shared set of fundamental principles. Key issues addressed were the QUAD's economic freedom, US-EU tensions over climate change, Iran nuclear deal, withdrawal from Iraq, etc., differences over which provides China ground to make inroads and increase its influence. Security issues discussed were: building more resilient value-chains that are less malleable to political manipulation and guard national and regional security, managing regional stability post withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, deeper collaboration in areas such as digital technology and pharmaceuticals, and boost of defence trade. Lastly, Indo-US complementarity in fair, transparent and sustainable infrastructure development in the indo-pacific region was advocated.

17 June 2020: Interaction with H.E. Mr. Barry O'Farrell, High Commissioner of Australia to India

The VIF hosted His Excellency, Mr. Barry O'Farrell for an interaction on India-Australia bilateral relations. Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, Amb. Anil Wadhwa, Amb. Kanwal Sibal, Amb. Satish Chandra, Lt. Gen Ravi Sawhney (retd.), Vice. Adm. Anil Chopra (retd.), and others from the fraternity were in attendance.

The shape of Indo-Australian bilateral relationship was stated to be indicative of certain trends: One, shift of change in the global centre of power to the Indo-Pacific; two, triumph of economics in world politics; three, contest over ideas of democracy and rule of law in the Indo-Pacific; and four, the dark side of globalisation in

the COVID-19 pandemic. A joint vision on the Indo-Pacific is very important as both India and Australia desire a free and open Indo-Pacific, value democracy, transparency, accountability, economic growth while abhorring territorial contestations.

18 June 2020: VIF-Prospect Foundation Interaction

Amb Tan-Sun Chen, Dr I-Chung Lai, Dr Ming-Chi Chen, Prof Mumin Chen and Ms Norah Huang from the Prospect Foundation, Taipei to discuss issues of US-China decoupling, the CCP's problems with economic downturn, Xi Jinping's nationalism game and absolute control over the military, China's aggressiveness in the South China Sea (SCS), India-China border, Taiwan's pro-independence stance and Hong Kong protests.

The Taiwan delegation also highlighted the untapped potential of India-Taiwan trade. The New Southbound Policy could promote cooperation not only in science and technology but also in other areas such as agriculture, tea, medical research and traditional medicines. The Indian participants appreciated Taiwan's capacity to deal with disruptions and saw opportunities for cooperation in agricultural sector, environmental issues, smart manufacturing and smart medicines. Overall, there was a consensus that India-Taiwan relations need to be more ambitious and there was a requirement to develop a fresh and new agenda in the relations.

29 June 2020: Interaction with Ambassador of Japan to India

The VIF hosted an interaction with the Ambassador of Japan to India, H.E. Mr. Satoshi

Suzuki that saw participation by many stalwarts from New Delhi's strategic fraternity. VIF and Embassy of Japan have a long-standing cooperation, especially for the SAMVAD dialogue series that is supported by both the Prime Ministers. Japan is also the largest foreign direct investor in India.

The ensuing discussions covered the bilateral and regional perspectives. Strategic expansion of bilateral relationship, its upgrade to 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership', initiation of bilateral military exercises and convergence of strategic interests were discussed, with the opinion that the ties were yet to attain full potential. While institutional structures exist, more substantive cooperation will have to be put in for more meaningful outcomes on issues such as development, food and water security, environmental protection, disaster mitigation, cyber security, clean energy etc. Leadership in both countries have to continue to push for strategic intertwining to ensure a more cooperative and collaborative partnership in the coming years.

13 July 2020: Developments in West Asia

In a virtual interactive session, geopolitics of oil, impact of COVID-19, regional economies, footprint of China in West Asia and implications of these for the Indo-Pacific region were discussed. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, Dr. Jawad Alnani, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan, Prof. Jonathan Fulton, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, and Amb Anil Trigunayat, Distinguished Fellow participated.

The interaction covered the aspects of oil-economic crises, cost of Yemen war, the COVID-19 pandemic, decline of exports to poorer Arab states, impact of recession on employment of Arab workers in Gulf States and shift in the US' 'interest based' approach. It was observed that the Gulf States' lookout for new options offered scope for innovative ways to finance new projects to overcome the current crisis. In the changing context, China has adopted a well thought out approach to penetrate in the region through its Belt and Road Initiative. From India's perspective, the West Asian region is considered as the extended neighbourhood. However, China's inroads could pose challenge for India's interests in the region.

29 September 2020: Iran- US Sanctions and Regional and International Perspectives

During the discussion on 'Iran: US Sanctions and Regional and International Perspectives', Amb. D P Srivastava observed that anxieties over the JCPOA, maritime conflicts in the Persian Gulf region, attack on oil fields, aggressive use of drones etc. have intensified the flashpoints of confrontation. Further exacerbations have come by growing collaboration of Gulf states and Israel, and Iran's defiance of US hostility, reaction to the killing of General Soleimani and enhancing uranium enrichment to pressurise other participating states in offering alternate financial lifelines. It was opined that the US' unilateral approach was losing currency - with Russia and China blocking the US' resolution on imposing sanctions on Iran and

UK, France and Germany abstaining. Meanwhile, China, a participant in the JCPOA, has sought to capitalise on the trade lull facing Iran and increase its economic stranglehold.

9 October 2020: VIF Webinar on 'International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)'

The webinar addressed the current status of and suggestions for expediting progress over the International North-South Transport Corridor. Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF, delivered the opening remarks, followed by an overview by Amb. D.P. Srivastava, Distinguished Fellow, VIF. Sri B. B. Swain, Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, and Sri D. B. Venkatesh Varma, Indian Ambassador to Russia, shared their perspectives on INSTC. A presentation was also made by Dr. Shankar Shinde, Chairman (Elect.), Freight Forwarders Association (FFAI).

Significance of this multi-modal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and onward to northern Europe via St. Petersburg in Russia to provide more direct access to Central Asia, Russia, and Europe was reiterated. The key pointers were: Iran and Azerbaijan emerging as regional transit hubs, the route being 40 percent shorter and 30 percent cheaper, and its boost to bilateral trade between India, Iran, Central Asia, and Russia. Moreover, unlike the BRI, INSTC is free from political aspirations. Importantly, the 'Convention on International Transport of Goods' under the TIR Convention would further facilitate trade and transit through the INSTC.

16 October 2020: China's Data Collection-Domestically and Internationally: Talk by Professor Christopher Balding

A virtual discussion with Professor Christopher Balding, Associate Professor at the Fulbright University, Vietnam, was organized to focus on data collection by Chinese government/companies through various means as part of security-surveillance and the paradox of information management in China. The talk addressed several key points, such as industrial espionage carried out by the Chinese companies on behest of the government, China's behaviour of surveillance and data collection. The speaker pointed to China's illicit means of surveillance through job websites, Hacking divisions, Intellectual Property (IP) databases, export of wired electronic equipment etc., all linked to its intelligence, security and secret police agencies.

This has to be a serious concern regarding India's national security. Lesson for India would be to strengthen its Cyber Security standards and to work on the issues of data protection and privacy as first countermeasure against China's data collection.

4 November 2021: VIF-Australian National University Strategic Dialogue

This Dialogue looked at the emerging geopolitical trends and their implications through presentations from Professor Rory Medcalf, Amb. Arun K Singh, Dr. David Brewster, Amb. Anil Wadhwa and Mr. Brendan Thomas-Noone. The

focus was on the symbolic importance of Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo and a resilient supply chain initiative. Both sides stressed on the need for greater cooperation, particularly within the context of building resilient supply chains in the Indo-Pacific region in order to reduce dependence on China.

19 November 2020: Quad Plus Dialogue

VIF, the designated think tank representing India, and think tanks from Quad members - JII, Japan, the Heritage Foundation, USA, ASPI, Australia – and the RSIS, Singapore and Chatham House, UK, as Quad Plus members, attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed recent developments with the Quad/Free and Open Indo-Pacific, made recommendations for the Quad and Quad Plus Dialogue to move forward. All participants were critical of China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and welcomed the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in Tokyo and the Malabar naval exercises of the four countries. The participants also discussed on how to keep ASEAN centrality in the Indo Pacific. There were reservations expressed about the inadequacy of unity and collective action and as to how to deal with China.

4 December 2020: Webinar on Indo-Uzbek Relations

Uzbek-India's multi-faceted relationships in political, trade-economic, education, science and technology, industry, agriculture, civil aviation and defence sector, and new avenues for further cooperation were the issues in this webinar. The Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS)

Uzbekistan led by Director Dr. Eldor Aripov, and the Centre for International Relations Studies (CIRS) led by Director Mr. Doniyor Kurbanov, Dr. Eldor Aripov. H.E. Mr. Dilshod Akhatov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to India and H.E. Mr. Manish Prabhat, Indian Ambassador to Uzbekistan, among others, participated. Presentations were made by Mr. Doniyor Kurbanov and Mrs. Manzura Khusnidinova (CIRS), Mr. Rustam Khuramov, Mr. Alisher Kadirov, (ISRS) and Amb. D. P. Srivastava, Distinguished Fellow, VIF. Advanced preparedness in combating pandemics, enhanced defence, anti-terror, technological and educational cooperation, trade and connectivity and concerns over Afghanistan were focused upon. A set of recommendations were proposed at the end.

7 January 2021: Talk by H.E. Amb. Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President

On a visit to India for the annual strategic dialogue between France and India, H.E. Amb. Emmanuel Bonn, diplomatic Advisor and G7-G20 Sherpa to the French President, spoke on 'France and India: Partners for a Stable and Prosperous Indo-Pacific' during a virtual discussion moderated by the VIF director, Dr. Arvind Gupta.

France's close relationship with the QUAD, optimistic strategic opportunities and bilateral defence and security relationships were reiterated. France's support against any direct threats to India, over the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council and blocking China's procedural games at international fora were also highlighted by the speaker.

19 March 2021: VIF-IISS Roundtable on the UK's Integrated Review - Impact on Relations with India

To deliberate on its 'Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy' released on 16 March 2021 for shaping the country's post-Brexit foreign, defence, security and development priorities and policies, IISS UK organized this webinar. The meeting was moderated by Mr. Rahul Roy Chaudhury and saw in attendance distinguished participants including Dr. Arvind Gupta, the Right Honourable Lord Jo Johnson of Marylebone, Mr. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Member of Parliament, Mr. Alex Ellis and Amb. Arun K. Singh.

The speakers agreed that the review reflected UK's foreign and security policy 'tilt' towards the Indo-Pacific region wherein China, India and Japan are recognised as the three most important powers. UK's desire to integrate its presence and deepen engagement as a European partner in the Indo-Pacific region was highlighted. Greater scope for UK-India partnership and clarity regarding dealing with an assertive China were also observed.

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

- Swami Vivekananda



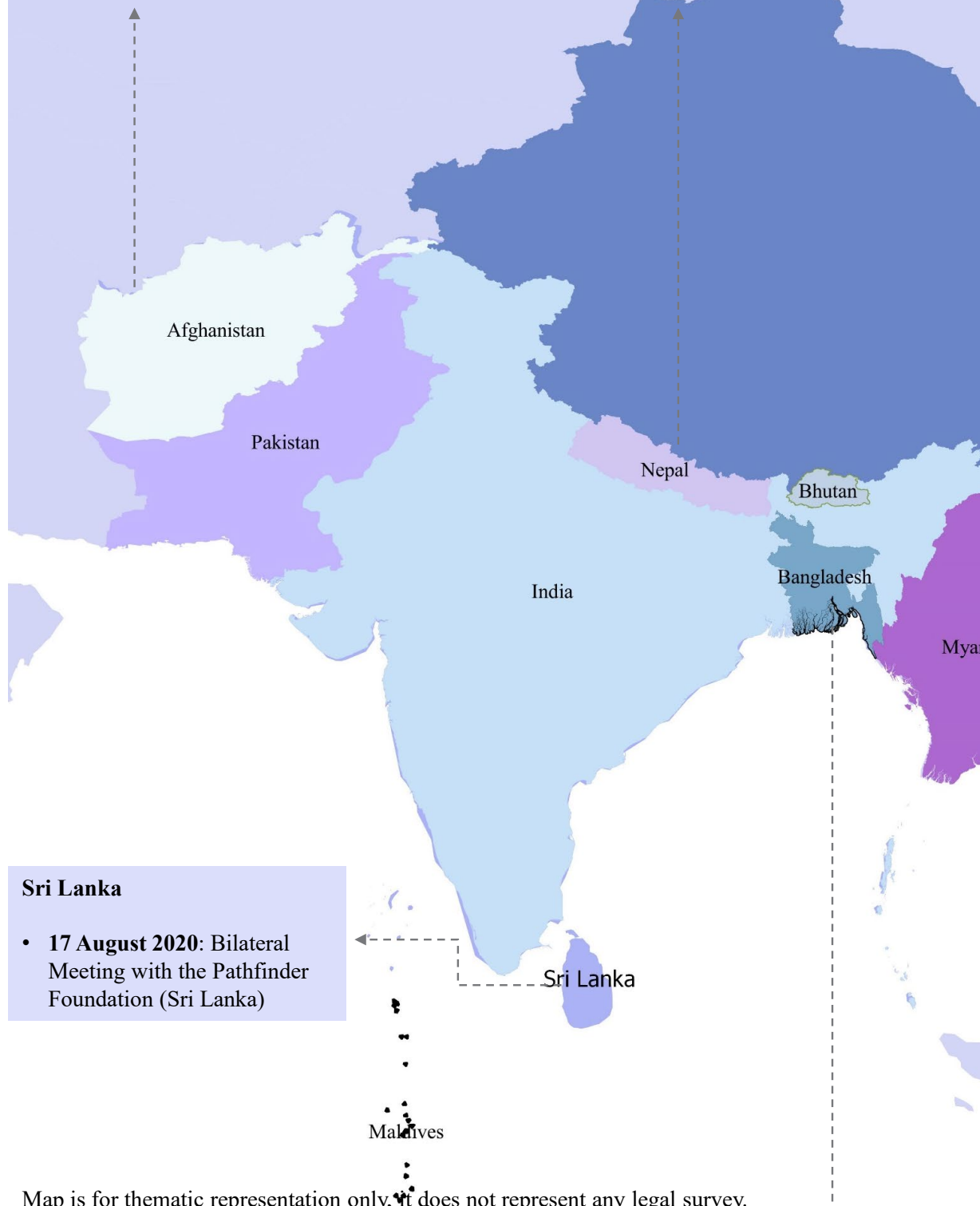
Neighbourhood Studies

Afghanistan

- **24 March 2021:** Interaction with H.E Mohammad Haneef Atmar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Nepal

- **23 November 2020:** Webinar on India-Nepal Relations: The Way Ahead



Sri Lanka

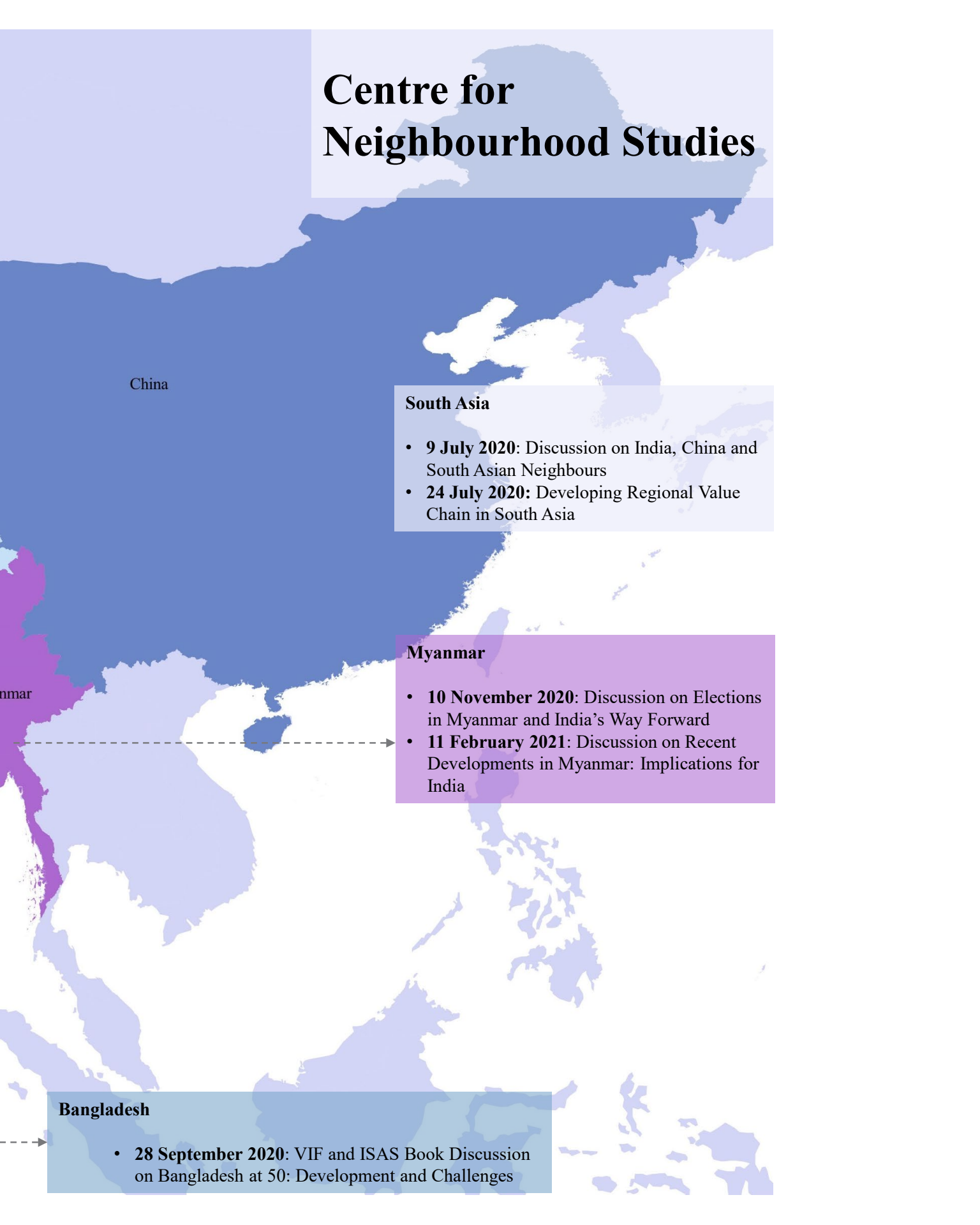
- **17 August 2020:** Bilateral Meeting with the Pathfinder Foundation (Sri Lanka)

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Centre for Neighbourhood Studies



China

South Asia

- **9 July 2020:** Discussion on India, China and South Asian Neighbours
- **24 July 2020:** Developing Regional Value Chain in South Asia

Myanmar

- **10 November 2020:** Discussion on Elections in Myanmar and India's Way Forward
- **11 February 2021:** Discussion on Recent Developments in Myanmar: Implications for India

Bangladesh

- **28 September 2020:** VIF and ISAS Book Discussion on Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges

The South Asian region witnessed significant development economically and politically, as well as at bilateral levels. Since March 2020, the rise in COVID-19 cases impacted the region's economy and strained the health care system. India as a significant player in the region provided medicinal and infrastructure support to each country under the SAARC framework and at the bilateral level. India's outreach to the neighbourhood in the Post COVID-19 world was discussed at the VIF during the two RTD organised online in May 2020.

The World Bank predicted an economic slowdown of 1.8 to 2.8 per cent this year for the region. The World Bank also predicted a drop of 22 per cent in remittances to South Asia in 2020. Understanding the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, VIF organised an online Round Table Discussion (RTD) on the possibilities of developing Regional Value Chains in July 2020.

India's Northeast holds an important place in India's security and economic interests within the region. During the year the Centre for Neighbourhood Studies published a book "Act East Policy and Northeast India" in 2021, authored by Dr Sreeradha Datta . The book was discussed at various platforms, such as Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA), Manipal University, Vitasta Publishers and Northeast live. The rising presence of China in the neighbourhood had also been a part of the various discussions at the VIF, which was elaborately analysed during the discussion on "India, China and South Asian Neighbours" in July 2020.

The Centre of Neighbourhood Studies also publishes daily Neighbourhood Digest, and a monthly Myanmar Round-Up. The Centre also

contributes to the monthly compilation of views of VIF Experts Groups on topics currently relevant to the neighbourhood.

Bangladesh

The year 2020 marked political stability in Bangladesh, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government enjoying an absolute majority in the parliament. However, the extremism prevailing in Bangladesh has been a cause of concern for India. This issue was discussed during the discussion organised by VIF in June 2020 on "Violent Extremism in Bangladesh and Post COVID-19 World". A discussion was organised in September 2020 on "Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges" a book edited by Dr Sreeradha Datta and Dr S Narayan, reflecting on the importance of India-Bangladesh close relations. VIF also organised VIMARSH on India-Bangladesh Relations in January 2021 with Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P. State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh as the main speaker.

Bhutan

Bhutan is an import-dependant country and relies on imports for essential products, particularly food and fuel from India. There were labour shortages and lower external demand. India provided its support by sending a consignment of medical supplies, including Hydroxychloroquine. India has also facilitated the maximum number of special Druk Air flights to ensure the return of Bhutanese students and nationals resident in India. Meanwhile, Bhutan committed USD 100,000 to the SAARC emergency fund proposed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. These developments

were discussed during the discussions organised on “Post COVID-19: India and Neighbourhood.”

Nepal

Politically, Nepal has witnessed internal turmoil since the beginning of the year. The failure to reach consensus on talks between the two chairs of the ruling Nepal Communist Party, KP Sharma Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, led to the dissolution of the House of Representatives in December 2020.

India-Nepal relations witnessed a dip in trust and cooperation in 2020 after the border row when Nepal claimed Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as part of its territories, to which India reacted sharply. These issues were discussed at VIF.

Maldives

Being a country driven by the tourism sector, COVID-19 impacted the Maldives economy badly. Maldives adopted an innovative approach to boost the tourism sector, i.e. ‘one island, one resort’ concept. However, in these tough times, China’s Exim Bank asked the Maldivian government to pay USD 10 million (MVR 154 million) (as an instalment to the loan of USD 127 million to former parliamentarian). VIF experts discussed these developments in various meetings. Maritime security was also one of the key concerns for the region, as in November 2020, Sri Lanka hosted tripartite talks between India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Myanmar

With the conduct of the third general election in November 2020, it was believed that democratic

forces were finally setting in the country. To discuss the conduct of elections and their impact on India-Myanmar relations, VIF organised a discussion in November 2020. However, the military coup declared on 01 February 2021, reversed the democratic progress made by the country so far. To discuss the same, VIF organised a discussion in February 2021, several podcasts were released to give an update on the current position.

Myanmar witnessed significant steps to bring peace and stability by joining hands with ethnic parties. An open letter was sent by the NLD government, immediately after winning the elections. The fourth “21st Century Panglong Conference” was concluded in August 2020, which was stalled since 2018. However, violence by the Myanmar military continued unabated during the year. The major ethnic armed organisation, which received India’s attention is Arakan Army, operating in Rakhine and Chin states. The AA is held responsible for slowing the development process of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project. Nevertheless, India-Myanmar relations touched new heights with the visit of the Indian Foreign Secretary and the Army Chief in October 2020.

Sri Lanka

Politically, Sri Lanka has had quite an eventful year. In August 2020, Sri Lanka conducted general elections. The SLPP, one of Sri Lanka’s newest parties founded by Rajapaksa, won 145 seats in the 225-member legislature. Recognising the importance of Sri Lanka, VIF organised a bilateral meeting in collaboration with Pathfinder Foundation, Sri Lanka in August 2020. In November of 2020, Sri Lanka hosted NSA-level talks between

India, Sri Lanka and Maldives on maritime security. The meeting saw the revival of the NSA-level dialogue among the three countries, which began almost a decade ago in 2011. The trilateral talks demonstrate the Indian intent to enhance the geographical reach of the Indian Navy.

Major Events at a Glance

9 July 2020: Discussion on India, China and South Asian Neighbours

An online discussion on 'India, China and South Asian Neighbours' saw participation of Dr Arvind Gupta, Dr Raj Verma, Dr Atul Aneja, Amb Ranjit Rae, Gen Ravi Sawhney, Amb Satish Chandra, among others. Dr Gupta outlined China's inroads into the South Asia region over the years referring to its influencing through the CPEC, presence in the Gilgit-Baltistan, interference in Nepal politics, the Hambantota Port project, stabilisation processes in Myanmar, projects in Bangladesh, territorial assertiveness and expanding activities in the Indian Ocean region which call for a revisit of India's policies towards China as well as the South Asian Neighbourhood.

The discussion surmised that in 2014, China started working for the new Asian Security concept, which meant establishing itself as a predominant power in Asia and upped its ante in the South Asia. Unfortunately, a sense of alienation has appeared between India and its neighbours, and China has exploited this situation. India therefore must 'Reorient, Revisit and Redefine' its diplomatic culture and change the perception in the South Asian Neighbourhood. Salient issues to that end like civilizational bonds, economic engagements,

strategic partnership etc. were also highlighted.

24 July 2020: Developing Regional Value Chain in South Asia

Mr Bipul Chatterjee, Mr Pratim Bose, Mr Analraj Bhattarai, Mr Shaquib Quoreshi, Dr Nuwanthi Senaratne and Amb Ranjit Rae participated in the online discussion on Possibility of Developing Regional Value Chains (RVCs) in South Asia.

It was observed that political issues often de-rail economic agendas and the region fails to harness the dividends that lie in economic cooperation among nations. Is it possible to develop enabling conditions that lead to integrated trade linkages and allow market dynamics to play a larger role that could provide an anchor and stability that the region needs? Developments of a multi-modal transportation system and pandemic affected global supply chains provide opportunities to develop regional production centres of goods and services in the region? Initiatives like transformation of Border Haats into Border Economic Zones could be adopted to that end. Focus on the South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) grouping to bring together Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in a project-based partnership would promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and build a better quality of life for the people of the sub-region.

17 August 2020: VIF-Pathfinder Foundation - Bilateral Meeting

The bilateral meeting on 'India-Sri Lanka Relations' was attended by Amb. Bernard

Goonetilleke, Chairman of Pathfinder Foundation, Admiral Prof Jayanath Colombage, Foreign Secretary of Sri Lanka, Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Former Governor of the Central Bank, Sri Lanka, Mr Sanjay Chadha - Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India, and Amb Anil Wadhwa, Former Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, India. Amb Prasad Kariyawasam, Former Foreign Secretary and High Commissioner for India from Sri Lanka also participated in the meeting.

The discussion was spread over the Indo-Sri Lanka economic and security relations in the geopolitical environment; increasing relevance of Indo-Pacific region in international politics has made it imperative to ensure close cooperation between India and Sri Lanka. Issues discussed were: asymmetric economic relations, ensuring regional security in the neighbourhood through strategic cooperation, improved connectivity and logistics infrastructure, GST motivation for Sri Lankan businesses in India, collaborative R&D for COVID-19 vaccines and promotion of people-to-people' relations. The Director VIF emphasized a need to reset the collective security arrangement to ensure that national sovereignty is encroached upon.

28 September 2020: VIF-ISAS Book Discussion on 'Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges'

VIF and Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore (ISAS-NUS) jointly organised a discussion on the book titled Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges edited by Dr Sreeradha Datta & Dr S Narayan.

The two Directors, Dr Arvind Gupta and Prof. Raja Mohan delivered their opening remarks in which Bangladesh's journey of transition from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to a developing country was described as an ongoing and outstanding achievement. The editors then briefed on the contents of each chapter. It was concluded with observation that despite economic slowdown in the pandemic period, Bangladesh shall continue to prosper and grow.

10 November 2020: Discussion on Elections in Myanmar and India's Way Forward

The discussion followed presentations by Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, Mr Sanjay Chadha, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Mr K Yhome, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, and Mr Sanjay Pullpaka, Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director delivered the opening remarks.

The discussion explored the instruments to build strong ties with the neighbouring country in political, defence, trade and investment and people to people areas. National League for Democracy's (NLD) emphatic performance in the elections much to the Tatmadaw's unhappiness, India's outreach to secure defence ties amid China's attempts to increase its influence around India's periphery, issues of bilateral trade and investment, and the need to continue with the people-to-people relations were delved into. It was suggested that Myanmar should be part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

23 November 2020: Webinar on India-Nepal Relations - The Way Ahead

VIF and Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA) organised a round table discussion on India-Nepal Relations participated by Director Dr Arvind Gupta, Gen Ravi Sawhney, Amb Satish Chanda, Dr Sreeradha Datta, Mr. Sunil KC, CEO AIDIA, Amb Ranjit Rae, General Rookmangud Katawal, Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma (retd), Mr. Uday SJB Rana, Mr. Sanjay Chadha, Dr. Deepak Prakash Bhatta, Mr. Purshottam Ojha and Dr. Nihar Nayak participated in the deliberations.

The discussion touched upon expanding economic cooperation, slow progress of development projects, Nepal's international trade and its transit through India, and the contentious political issues. Commonalities of political, cultural, religious and linguistic similarities notwithstanding, increased involvement of China in Nepalese affairs was seen as a thorn in India-Nepal relations. It was reiterated that India will always be a strong and reliable partner for Nepal.

11 February 2021: Discussion on 'Recent Developments in Myanmar: Implications for India'

Following opening remarks by the Director, Dr Arvind Gupta, presentations were made by Amb Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, and Major General Alok Deb. From VIF, Gen Ravi Sawhney, Dr Sreeradha Datta and Cchavi Vasisht participated in the discussion. Three concerns were addressed: US' Myanmar policy and sanctions; the coup; and, Myanmar being pushed into China's dependency. Issues regarding Rohingyas and the Arakan Army which concern India's security were also discussed. Reinforcement of defence and political relations, trade, investment, connectivity, agriculture and other small projects and usage of Sittwe Port were some of the suggested measures that were discussed.



National Security and Strategic Studies

Amidst the Coronavirus Pandemic since early 2020 and following the new norm of “Work from Home”, the Centre for National Security and Strategic Studies (hereafter CNSSS) at the VIF, during April 2020 – March 2021, carried out significant activities under the assigned charter. Along with generating “Bi-Weekly New Digest on Defence and Terrorism Studies”, which covers the crucial developments in Defence, and Terrorism (National & International) studies, the Centre focused on the dynamic issues related to the spread of Islamic terrorism in India and globally, developments in the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), and the significant and crucial developments, including the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Focusing on the national security challenges the VIF organised virtual Vimarsh on “National Security Challenges and Air Power”, in which Chief of Air Staff (COAS) Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria was the distinguished speaker in December 2020; and on “Role of Indian Army in dealing with contemporary National Security Challenges”, in which General Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) was the distinguished speaker in February 2021. Both online events witnessed the participation of distinguished former diplomats, civil servants, experts from defence, academia, and media.

Considering significant developments in Jammu and Kashmir, along with publications centric to the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370, the CNSSS recorded podcasts: on “Implications of Migration of the Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir”, and on “LoC Ceasefire” with Lt Gen Syed A Hasnain

as the distinguished speaker. The CNSSS’s scholars published several commentaries, papers etc which provide analysis of the ongoing developments in India and its foreign policy, especially the significance of the “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” campaign during the coronavirus pandemic. Some of the write-ups titled “Rethinking National Security in the Age of Pandemics”, “Covid-19 and India’s Maoists”, “Lockdown Scenario: A Golden Opportunity for Cyber Criminals”, “A Year After Abrogation of Article 370- What the State has Achieved”, “Article 370 Fully Integrates J&K with India”, “J&K Less War, More Peace: An Assessment of the Year after the Decisions of 05 August 2019”, “Assessing India’s Abrogation of Article 370, and Kashmir’s Journey Ahead”, “National Security Planning”, “Kashmir- Is the Time Ripe for a New Outreach Strategy?”, “The Curious Case of Huawei”, “Cyber DNA of China— Deep, Focused, and Militarised”, among others.

In October 2020, the centre also organised a virtual discussion with Prof Christopher Balding, a renowned expert, to understand China’s malpractices of data collection—domestically and internationally. Shri Ram Sewak Sharma shared insights on India’s digital journey, including brainchild of Aadhaar Card to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and other achievements in the technological pathway as part of his task on “India Digital Leap forward”. Focusing on the issues related to Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), the VIF released a report titled “Left-Wing Extremism: The Way Ahead” in October 2020. The Task Force Report highlighted the situation of the Maoist movement in India and made recommendations for the policymakers regarding the way ahead.

Major Events at a Glance

12-14 October 2020: Webinar on Introduction to India's Strategic Thinking and its Determinants

A third in the series of lectures on India's national security and strategic culture, the webinar exposed young students, academicians, researchers and professionals from various disciplines to historical and theoretical research in the field of strategic studies. 40 participants including a foreign national attended. A panel of eminent experts spoke on topics such as: Impact of Civilizational values on India's Strategic Outlook & World View (Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF); Impact of Covid-19 on Future of Indian Economy & the Way Forward (Dr. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MP, Vice Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies); Covid-19 Pandemic & Climate Change: India's Response (Dr. Uttam Sinha, Fellow, Institute of Defence Studies & Analysis); Evolving Challenges for India's Foreign & Security Policies (Amb. Kanwal Sibal, Former Foreign Secretary, Member Advisory Council, VIF); Analysing India-China Military Face off & Strategies for Dealing with China (Lt. Gen. Rakesh Sharma, Former Corps Commander, Ladakh); and, Removal of Art. 370, Situation in Jammu & Kashmir & Dealing with Pakistan sponsored Terrorism (Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain, Distinguished Fellow, VIF, Member NDMA and former Corps Commander in Kashmir). There was an active interaction between the distinguished speakers and the participants who requested for more such capsules/workshops and longer schedule to cover additional topics.

25-27 February 2021: Online Workshop on India's Strategic & National Security Issues for University Students/Youth/ Scholars/ Young Professionals

Three-day workshop was organized to offer awareness among young students, researchers and professionals regarding analyses and conduct of advanced historical and theoretical research in the field of strategic and security studies and to promote Indian precepts, concepts and methods to that end. The lectures focused on evolving dynamics of geopolitics, geo-strategy and technological trends that have a great bearing on India's strategic and security approaches. Topics covered were: India's Civilizational & Cultural Heritage: Impact on India's Strategic & Security Outlook (Dr. Arpita Mitra, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol); Pakistan Sponsored Terrorism and Situation in Kashmir post Abrogation of Article 370 (Lt. Gen. Ata Hasnain, Distinguished Fellow, VIF, Member NDMA & former Corps Commander in Kashmir); Technology Dominance and the role of Bharatiya Mind (Ms. Devsena Mishra, Promoter of Advanced Technologies, Startup Ecosystem and Digital India); India's Response to Covid-19 and India's Economic Outlook including Aatmanirbharta Policies (Mr. Pranav Kumar, Director and Head International Trade Policy, Confederation of Indian Industry); An Approach to Read Future Technology Trends (Ms. Devsena Mishra); India's Response to China's Aggression along the LAC (Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Rakesh Sharma, former Corps Commander, Ladakh).

The workshop and the Q&A sessions elicited a very good response. Over 100 participants from diverse backgrounds and regions of India took part.

18 March 2021: Release of Forgotten Kashmir: The Other Side of the Line of Control by Shri Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K

Shri Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir released 'Forgotten Kashmir: The Other Side of the Line of Kashmir' a book authored by Ambassador D.P. Srivastava in a virtual event. The book traces political, constitutional, and economic developments in the POK, based on Pakistani and international sources and brings out that the people of the territory neither enjoy Azadi nor autonomy. The attendees included Shri S. Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF, Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF, Ambassador Satish Chandra, former High Commissioner to Pakistan, and Lt. General Ata Hasnain among others.

Shri Manoj Sinha pointed out that the extensively researched work fills up an important gap in our understanding of POK. He commented particularly on its coverage of Gilgit-Baltistan which has witnessed a major Chinese presence.

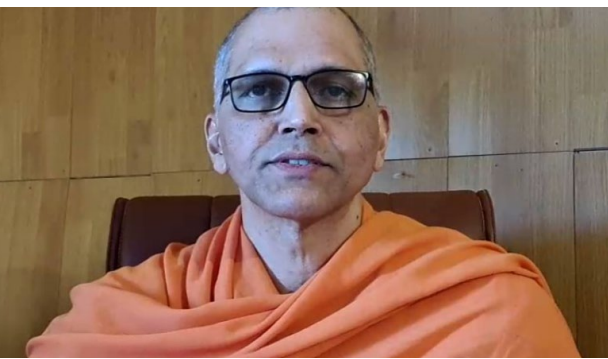
24-26 March 2021: Workshop for Diplomats

Following positive feedbacks from the foreign diplomats, the VIF organised the third workshop in virtual mode on 'Introduction to India's Strategic Thinking'. The endeavour was to introduce foreign diplomats to the conceptual frameworks and thought processes, especially in the light of

India's cultural moorings and traditions that go into crafting of foreign and security policies. 48 foreign diplomats participated including some ambassadors, deputy chiefs of Missions and Defence Attaches.

Subjects covered were India's Engagement with the World by Sh. S Gurumurthy, Chairman, VIF; Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Indian Economy's Future Outlook by Mr. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MP Rajya Sabha, & Vice Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies, VIF; India's Foreign & Security Policies: Challenges & Opportunities by Amb. Kanwal Sibal, Former Foreign Secretary & Member Advisory Council, VIF; Understanding China by Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli, Professor, Chinese Studies Centre for East Asian Studies, JNU; Understanding Pakistan by Mr. Tilak Devasher, Member NSAB, former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat and, Developments in Afghanistan and Myanmar by Amb Gautam Mukhopadhaya, former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Pakistan & Syria.

The presentations were well received and responded with very active Q&A sessions.



Historical and Civilisational Studies

Major Events at a Glance

21 May 2020: Book discussion on 'Dharma in Governance', authored by Gunjan Pradhan Sinha

Panel for the online book discussion included the author, Prof. Arvind Sharma (McGill University), Col. Pradeep K Gautam (USI), Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) and Swami Narasimhananda (Ramakrishna Mission). The discussion was moderated by Dr. Arvind Gupta. The book touches upon the concepts of rajadharma and dandaniti from the Mahabharata, yogaksema from the Arthashastra, anekantavada from Jainism, upaya kausalya from Buddhism, and anasaktiyoga from Gandhi.

In his Special Remarks, Prof. Arvind Sharma highlighted the importance of having a welfare policy that can impact the farthest fringe of society. The need to turn to Indian definitions and terms in our governance discourses to create right awareness was emphasized.

22 June 2020: The Shared Heritage of Yoga: Ideas and Practices from Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism

On the occasion of International Day of Yoga, VIF organized a talk titled 'The Shared Heritage of Yoga: Ideas and Practices from Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism' by Professor Christopher Key Chapple (Loyola Marymount University, USA) under the VIF Lecture Series 'Understanding Indian History & Civilization'. Prof. Chapple highlighted the inseparable connection of Yoga with ethics and charted the development of Yoga across Hinduism,

Jainism and Buddhism as a practice that is at once ancient, yet modern and relevant.

In his talk, Prof. Chapple recounted the trajectory of history, divergence and convergence in the development of Yoga, starting from the Upanisads through the development of Samkhya philosophy, to the development of the vratya fraternity and the birth of Jainism and Buddhism. He pointed out that the Vedic ceremonies and vows of ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, and aparigraha was in tune with the traditional thought and practice in India of revering natural elements as a token of gratitude. Yoga thus has afforded the possibility of joining oneself with the process of nature.

16 July 2020: Talk on 'Re-conceptualizing Religious History: Archaeological Findings from Itkhori, a Composite Sacred Space'

A talk by Professor Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay (Vivekananda Chair Professor of Social Science, University of Calcutta), under the VIF Lecture Series 'Understanding Indian History & Civilization', was held via webinar. The talk was focused on a selected religious space of eastern India—Itkhori or Itkhairi—located in the core area of the eastern Indian plateau of Chotanagpur where exploration and documentation has demonstrates features of both Buddhist and Brahmanical traditions.

Itkhori in the Chhotanagpur Plateau is supposedly on the ancient pilgrim route from Bodhgaya to Odisha, bridging the early port of Tamralipta. It is a sacred space of remarkable historical significance, and yet that has been treated as a peripheral place

by contemporary Indian historians, thanks to their typical economic and political prism. The speaker contended that traditional historical scholarship in India on subjects such as iconography etc. needs to be updated in the light of modern findings.

30 July 2020: Indian Philosophy for Beginners

The VIF's new lecture series 'Indian Philosophy for Beginners' explains the Vedas, Upanishads and the Indian schools of philosophy to Indian and foreign diplomats, strategists, students and researchers. The purpose is to bridge the gap between strategic thinking and philosophy by focusing on practical application of Indian ideas in the field of Indian diplomacy. These lectures are being delivered by Professor Shashi Prabha Kumar, Dean, Sri Sankaracarya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi.

The first lecture titled 'Introduction to Indian Philosophy' was held online when the hoary concepts of darsana, satkaryavada, parinamavada, vivartavada, sampradaya, shraddha, purvapaksha, pramana and tattvajnana were elucidated.

6 August 2020: Symposium on 'The Arthasastra - New Directions in Research'

The aim of the symposium, was to examine the strategic relevance of the Arthasastra for governance today and promoting research on the issue. The panellists included Professor Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay, Vivekananda Chair Professor of Social Science, University of Calcutta, Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, Dr Arpita Mitra,

Research Fellow, VIF, Dr Kajari Kamal, faculty for the postgraduate programme in Strategic Studies at Takshashila Institution, Dr Saurabh Mishra, Assistant Professor, Amity Institute for Defence & Strategic Studies, Dr Medha Bisht, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, and Colonel Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Honorary Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research, United Service Institution of India (USI).

The symposium delved into the Arthasastra's historical perspectives and world wide scholarship, its relevance in framing India's strategic culture and the need for its concerted interpretation and application on matters of foreign policy, intelligence, war and internal security as applicable to the contemporary times. Finally, Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF, illuminated the significance of Indian philosophy vis-à-vis the Western philosophical thought and the points of affinity and differences.

10 August 2020: Discussion on 'Chikitsa Dharma (Medical Ethics): Insights from Ancient Indian Tradition'

Aim of the discussion was to understand medical ethics in the historical, modern and general context so that India-specific issues such as current perceptions of doctor-patient relationship, approach to treatment of patients, issues faced by both doctors and patients during the pandemic, lack of faith in the medical institutions, the concept of holistic healthcare etc., can be addressed. The panel consisted of Dr Arun Agarwal, Former President, Delhi Medical Council and current President, Delhi Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy, and Ms. Gunjan Pradhan,

researcher and author on public policy in the Indian context.

Modern medical ethics from morals, values, principles and laws from professional conduct point of view, the ancient medical system's focus on holistic treatment of patients, ethics of Ayurveda around preservation of good health and ability to fight disease, dependence on technology and doctors' fossilisation of the basic clinical skills, and expenditure on cure rather than prevention were the issues discussed. It was surmised that the ancient system focused on the mind, the body and the soul and that there was a need to bring the various medical systems together to restore faith of the people and provide them with holistic treatment.

20 August 2020: VIF Book Discussion on 'Patterns in Past Settlements' authored by M B Rajani

The purpose of the webinar was to introduce people to the new methodologies being used in archaeological research with the help of modern technologies. The main speaker of the event was the author of this book, Dr. M B Rajani, Associate Professor at National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore.

The author suggested that to create large-scale database for studying our ancient civilisations, we have to scavenge for traces of past human activities that have survived in material forms, and develop expertise in interrogating these materials before their secrets fade into oblivion. To that purpose, advanced technologies needed to be used to discover various proofs of ancient history

including a combination of archaeology, history, art history, architectural history, heritage science, geoarchaeology, geomorphology, remote sensing, GIS (Geographic Information System) as well as cultural heritage conservation key role for satellite imagery.

26 August 2020: Lecture on 'Environmental Awareness in the Vedas'

Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar, Dean, Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan gave her second lecture in the series, 'Indian Philosophy for Beginners', titled 'Environmental Awareness in the Vedas'. First, Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, brought forth the need to change the western mindset of overcoming or conquering nature and the existential threat it poses with the help of our ancient thought in the context of climate change to mankind.

Next, Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar highlighted the importance of adopting and understanding the kind of respect given to the environment in our Vedas which commends human beings to have friendly relations with each aspect of nature. She further explained the ideals of the six factors of prithvi sukta, namely, satyam brihat, ritam ugram, diksha, tapaha, brahma and yajna for maintaining and sustaining the environment. Lastly, Professor Kumar stated that environment needs nurturing for our own well-being.

8 October 2020: India's Musical Footprints in Asia

In a lecture on 'Understanding Indian History & Civilization' series. Kalamandalam Shri Piyal

Bhattacharya, artist, researcher and founder of Chidakash Kalalay in Kolkata, spoke on 'India's Musical Footprints in Asia'. The talk mainly focused on string instruments as found in the classical treatise Natyasastra of Bharata Muni.

Shri Bhattacharya discussed the different kinds of classical music instruments that no longer exist in original forms. Journey of some of these instruments from ancient India before and after the 10th century to Myanmar, Cambodia and other Southeast Asian countries was also traced.

19 October 2020: Talk on Vedic Feminism

Next in the series of lectures on 'Philosophy for Beginners', Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar spoke on 'Vedic Feminism'. Beginning with the Vedic invocation to the feminine power, the talk went on to explain the Vedic ritual of marriage, woman's participation and place in society, Role of Women in the Vedic Period, Different Perspectives on Feminism and Difference between Vedic and Western Feminisms. Prof. Kumar concluded the lecture by emphasizing upon the Grihastha Ashram or the family system mentioned in the Vedic literature.

26 November 2020: Lecture on 'Introduction to Vedic Literature: The Upanishads'

In this is part of the VIF Lecture Series 'Philosophy for Beginners', Prof Shashi Prabha Kumar highlighted the importance of the Vedic literature—the world's oldest repository of human knowledge. She spoke about the nature of the

Vedic literature and the universal relevance of the four Vedas. The Upanishads, which constitute the Vedanta, the end portion and the essence of the Vedas was elucidated with explanation of the term 'Upanishad' as 'knowledge that is to be acquired by sitting near the guru'. At the end of the lecture, it was clear that the Vedic corpus of texts constitutes one of the most invaluable heritages of not only Indians but the entire humankind.

17 December 2020: Talk on 'Philosophy of the Upanishads'

Continuing with the VIF initiative of 'Philosophy for Beginners', Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar elaborated on the 'Philosophy of the Upanishads' through this webinar. The talk began with citing of the eleven principal Upanishads and went on to explain the symbolic meaning of Upanishads, and its three philosophical sub-divisions, viz., Metaphysics, Epistemology and Ethics. Next explained were the translation of the Upanishads, its famous allegories, the associated spiritual journey and the philosophy of the Omkar. The talk was followed by a Q&A session. At the end, Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, stressed upon the role of the seeker and seer of knowledge in the process of learning, and opined that the knowledge of the Upanishads should be imparted to children at home, and colleagues at workplace to make us better human being.

11 January 2021: Panel Discussion on Swami Vivekananda and National Development

Organised to commemorate the 158th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, eminent speakers invited to the panel were Swami

Shuddhidananda, Adhyaksha, Advaita Ashrama (branch of Ramkrishna Math and Vision), Kum. Nivedita Bhide, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, Dr R Balasubramaniam, Founder, Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement & Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement. The panel discussion began with the opening remarks from Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF India.

During the discussion, practical aspects of Vedanta, significance of Atman, Swami Vivekananda's patriotism, his contribution to humanity, and values of character building and education in Swami Vivekananda's teachings were elucidated.

25 January 2021: Talk on Introduction to Charvaka Philosophy

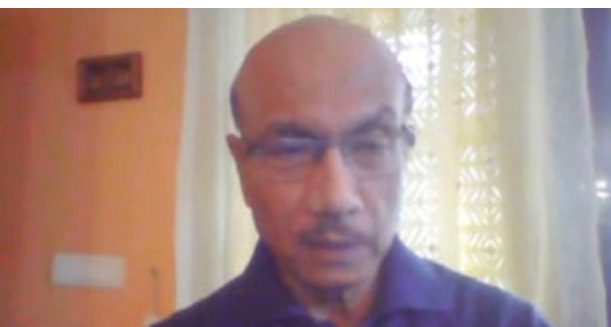
Under the VIF lecture series on 'Philosophy for Beginners', 'Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar, Dean, Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bhartaiya Vidya Bhavan Vivekananda International Foundation, spoke on Introduction to Charvaka Philosophy which rejects the spiritual outlook propagated by the Upanishads.

Explaining that practitioners of Charvaka Philosophy are thorough Nastikas who don't believe in God, Vedic authority or verbal testimonies, the Prof. pointed out that the Philosophy emphasises the naturalistic, realistic, atheistic, rationalistic, and logical perspective. She also highlighted debates between Charvakas and other schools of Philosophy like Buddhist's and Jain's.

1 March 2021: Talk on Introduction to Bauddha and Jaina Philosophy

The webinar, part of the VIF lecture series 'Philosophy for Beginners', began with opening remarks by Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF. First, Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar emphasised the epistemology of the Bauddha Philosophy and the two ways of knowing: pratyaksha and anumana. Further, questions touched upon were: is this world eternal or non-eternal; is this world finite or infinite; is the soul and body different from each other, and is there rebirth or reincarnation after death, adding that Buddha didn't want to answer metaphysical questions of which the world is uncertain. The four noble truths propounded by Buddha - everything in the world is suffering; every suffering has a cause on which it is dependent; suffering can be eliminated, and some paths lead to the end of suffering – were also explained.

Next, the Speaker touched upon the sources of Jaina Philosophy, including the Tattvartha Sutra. She emphasised the contribution of Jaina Philosophy, which includes metaphysics and epistemology, to the Indian schools of thoughts, the most crucial being the theory of non-absolutism.



Governance and Political Studies

Major Events at a Glance

11 May 2020: Round Table Discussion on 'Post COVID-19: India and the Neighbourhood'

Chaired by Amb Satish Chandra, the discussion was constructed around presentations by Ambassadors Ranjit Rae, Ashok Kantha, Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty and Prof S.D. Muni. General Ravi Sawhney, Dr Sreeradha Datta, Colonel Jaideep Chanda, among others from the VIF attended. The RTD was an attempt to reflect on India's position and role in the South Asian region in a Post-COVID-19 scenario.

A collective concern of the South Asian countries facing a catastrophe and India's efforts in helping the neighbours in these times of socio-economic distress due to COVID-19 was shared during the RTD. Political developments associated with the Chinese Government's interference in Nepal's domestic politics, political disruptions by the religious clergy against the pandemic measures in Bangladesh, PLA's recent transgression at Nathu La and Eastern Ladakh were the issues that were underlined. The need to cooperate in production and supply of essential medical equipment, establishment of SAARC COVID-19 Fund and resolution of bilateral issues within the neighbourhood in a 'mission' mode were also emphasised.

3 September 2020: VIF Webinar on 'National Education Policy-2020 and Nation Building'

The VIF, a forerunner in policy planning for nation building, has taken up the issues related to

the NEP-2020 having long-term bearing on the country's development. Describing as one of the most important educational reforms in the country, Dr. Gupta, Director, saw it as an initiative slated to have widespread impact on the nation and its academic system. The webinar was addressed by Prof. K. K. Aggarwal, Distinguished Fellow VIF, Chairman, National Board of Accreditation and founder Vice Chancellor, GGSIP University, New Delhi. It was pointed out that the NEP-2020 policy defines the learning outcomes in terms of what we expect from our youth and then gives concrete implementation guidelines.

Next, Prof. J. S. Rajput, former Director of the NCERT, reiterated the UNESCO report stating that, "A time has come when education is important not just for nation building but also our survival." According to him, NEP-2020 was a transformational step wherein India took up the responsibility for nation building the Indian way. Prof. T. V. Kattimani, Vice Chancellor of the Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh, Vizianagaram and a member of the Drafting Committee of the NEP, highlighted that NEP-2020 has a strategy on nation building with the best education available where knowledge acquisition and work should go together. The webinar proved to be an eye opener.

30 September 2020: Panel Discussion on 'Holistic Health Care in India: The Way Forward'

The discussion had as panelists, Dr. Arun Agarwal, Professor of Excellence, Ex-Dean, Maulana Azad Medical College & Former President, Delhi Medical Council, Dr. Tanuja Nesari, Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda, and Dr. Devang J

Sutarwala, BHMS, DIP IACH, and former Guest Lecturer of Organon of Medicine at Netai Charan Chakravarty Homeopathic Medical College & Hospitals. Issues discussed were: the link between physical health and general 'well being', the concept of Holistic Medicine, and health as the balanced state of life in all components of being.

Importance of integrative medicine in the health care system to use all appropriate therapeutic approaches– conventional and non-mainstream, within a framework that focuses on health, and relevance of Ayurveda in that scheme was highlighted. Further, denial of the idea of holistic health was viewed as one of the biggest flaws in the present day health care system. At the end, the need for convergence of different branches and fields of medical science that provides for a lifestyle to ensure that the person remains healthy was emphasized.

7 October 2020: Webinar on 'NEP-2020 –Towards Holistic Education'

Second in the series on NEP, webinars had as panellists, Prof. K. K. Aggarwal, Prof. M K Sridhar, Member, Drafting Committee of National Education Policy 2020 & Former Dean, Department of Management Studies, Bangalore University, and Ms. Bindu (Gayatri) Dalmia, columnist, social commentator & Chairperson, National Committee on Financial Literacy & Inclusion for Women-NITI Aayog. Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF, began the webinar with a reference to our national leaders Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Dr Radhakrishnan who have promoted holistic development of individuals in multiple disciplines.

Prof. Aggarwal explained that VIF's long term national goals like national security required producing the right kind of personnel who are free from compartmentalisation of domains with absolutely no knowledge sharing. Whereas the NEP allows students to decide and pursue what he wants to do, be it music, science and any other technological/vocational subject combined with it. Prof. Sridhar then elaborated how the NEP-2020 covers the total span of holistic education by talking of education right from the first year to lifelong learning leading to holistic development of a student. Next, Smt. Dalmia stressed on how the graduates shall adopt to this multidisciplinary transformation, thus directing students towards cumulative and composite knowledge and employment opportunities.

At the end, Kum. Nivedita Bhide, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, highlighted that the NEP-2020 was that software whose hardware implementation challenge needs to be worked on.

18 November 2020: Webinar on 'NEP-2020 and STEM Education'

The third webinar in the series focused on the STEM education and how the NEP deals with it. Prof. K. K. Aggarwal, Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education and Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology were the panelists. Prof. Aggarwal explained how STEM education has now expanded into a multi-disciplinary approach under the NEP-2020.

Next, Prof. Sahasrabudhe elaborated how education in specific discipline can include learning

from others too, thus making an individual useful for the society without restricting his/her abilities. Lastly Prof. Sharma stressed on dynamism of education to the adoption of new technological changes like Industry 4.0. He also explained the three cultural elements of Aatmanirbhar Bharat namely self-confidence, self-respect and self-introspection. The deliberations thus shed light on the STEM perspective of the NEP-2020.

22 February 2021: Webinar on 'National Security and Media'

The webinar began with Dr Arvind Gupta highlighting the important role media plays in how a national security issue is projected, presented, and interpreted by the domestic and international audience at large. He also emphasized on the

need for more training for spokespersons, better coordination between the government and media, and role of think tanks to build vital narratives quickly in the current era of hyper information.

Following those remarks, Pranay Upadhyay, ABP News and Ajit Dubey, ANI News shared their experiences in reporting defense and national security issues. Both the journalists noted the significance and responsibilities of media as an important tool of statecraft and a potent vehicle to carry information to the masses. At the end, the necessity for more proactive approach by the authorities to outline broad contours of events in order to meet the requirements of the modern news cycle and active engagement by think tanks were highlighted.



Economic Studies

Major Events at a Glance

25 May 2020: Joint VIF-CII Discussion on Aatmanirbhar Bharat

The discussion on 'Mission Aatmanirbhar Bharat: Decoding Self-Reliance and Charting the Road to Recovery' was led by panelists Dr. Janmejaya Sinha, Chairman-India, Boston Consulting Group, included Mr. Vinayak Chatterjee, Chairman, Feedback Infra Pvt. Ltd, Mr. R.Mukundan, Managing Director, Tata Chemicals Ltd., Mr. B. Thiagarajan, Managing Director, Blue Star Ltd., and Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF.

Observing the Rs. 20 lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat package to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and revive growth as an inflection point in Indian economic history, the theme of the discussion pointed that the path towards self-reliance for India would entail developing its strengths in critical areas like defence and security, along with re-setting the terms on which we engage with the world. This purpose requires synergised action in three major areas, namely, healthcare, economy and geopolitics. Aspects of Investment in Infrastructure, Reforming the Business Environment, Exporting Services, Affixing Social Responsibility and Alternate Funding Mechanism were delved into.

26 May 2020: Decoding Aatmanirbhar Bharat with Dr. Anantha Nageswaran

A virtual interaction with Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran was organized to discuss the Special Economic Atmanirbhar Bharat Package announced by the Government in the wake of COVID-19. Dr. Nageswaran is a member of the Prime Minister's

Economic Advisory Council. He is a Distinguished Fellow at VIF and a senior economist with a vast body of work in the financial and management sector.

Dr. Nageswaran began by emphasizing that the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic has challenged all existing notions of economic policymaking and thwarted economic activity, leading the global economy to the verge of massive recession. All relief measures have to be understood in this context. He then delved into the aspects of timing and size of package, emergency credit facility and financial sector reforms. In conclusion, it was reiterated that the economy should be reopened gradually as long as proper precautions are in place and those at a higher risk are adequately cared for.

7 August 2020: Webinar on 'Indian Economy – Today and Future Prospects'

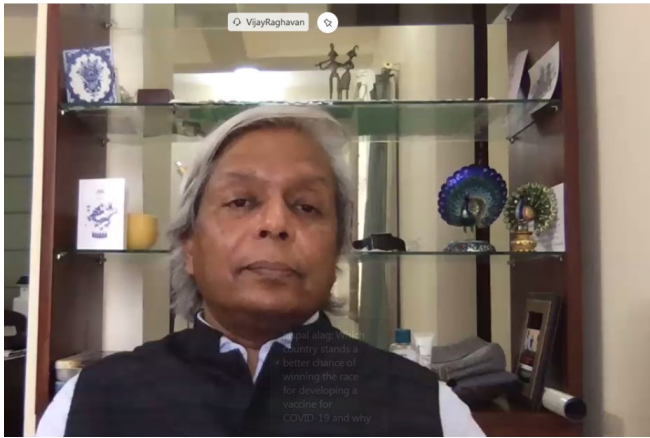
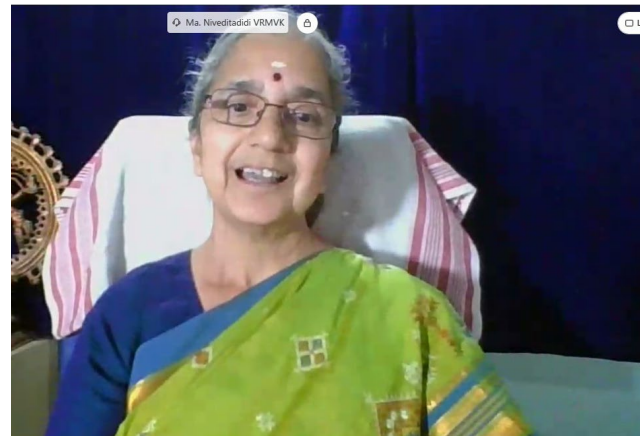
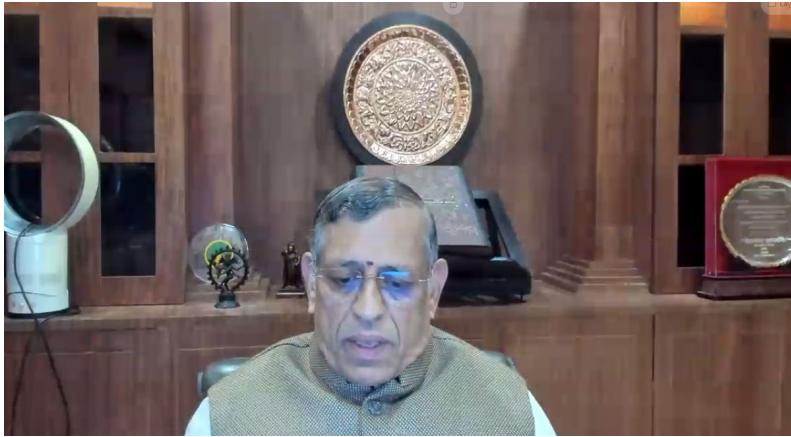
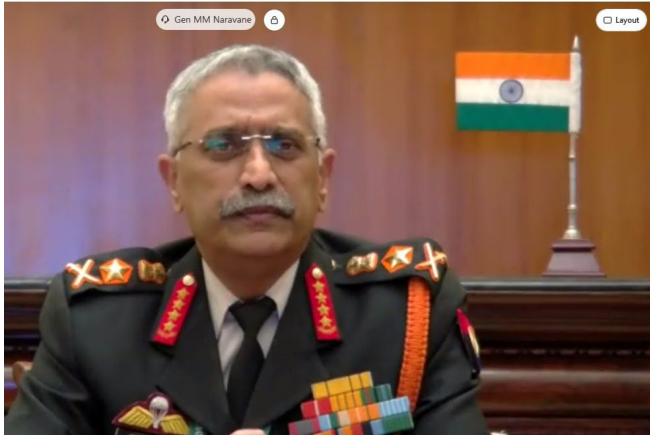
A VIF-CII joint panel discussion was organized to discuss the issues covering the overall economy and sectoral perspectives, immediate, short and medium-term measures needed from the government to boost growth, and as to how Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan can support economic recovery and help sustain medium-term growth. The webinar began with remarks by Dr Arvind Gupta, pointing at the nation's economic and security crisis, negative growth rates in certain core sectors, higher urban unemployment rate and plummeted consumer confidence. Indications of recovery ahead was also mentioned.

The discussion surveyed the aspects of macro-economic and MSME perspectives, the

financial sector, consumer durables, engineering, procurement and construction, and tourism, travel & hospitality. Opinions on India becoming a world factory, promotion of electronics sector manufacturing, and balanced approach to trade protection measures, corporate income tax rates and extension of the Phased Manufacturing Program and Production Linked Incentives to other key sectors were also shared. Certain additional recommendations made were: clearance of

outstanding industrial dues, upgradation of basic infrastructure, boosting the role of MSMEs, support for the travel, tourism and hospitality industry and ease of doing business to attract investments.

The discussion concluded with remarks from Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) & Vice-Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies, VIF.





Vimarsh

8 June 2020: Global & Indian Economy in the Post-COVID Era

The Vimarsh public webcast brought together an eminent panel comprising of Sh. S. Gurumurthy, Chairman, VIF and Independent Director, Reserve Bank of India; Member of Parliament [RS] Sh. Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Vice Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies; Ambassador Prabhat P. Shukla, Distinguished Fellow, VIF, and Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF.

The panel focused on the massive disruption triggered due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of battling both the health crisis as well as the impending threat of global recession. The discussions centered on India's future economic trajectory and recommended policy measures for the government to adopt.

25 June 2020: Story of Emergency (1975-1977): the Greatest threat to Democracy, How the people fought and won

The Vimarsh had a panel comprising of KN Govindacharya, founder of Bharat Vikas Sangam, Eternal Hindu Foundation and Rashtriya Swabhimani Andolan, Dr A. Surya Prakash, Vice-Chairman, Executive Council, Nehru Memorial and former Chairman of the Prasar Bharati, Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF and Dr Arvind Gupta, Director of the VIF.

Terming the Emergency of 1975 as the darkest period in Indian Democracy, talks by the three panelists described the events that led its declaration, role of the coterie around Mrs Gandhi,

the human rights violations, censorship, subversion of bureaucracy and judiciary, and rule by party rather than the Constitution of the country. The session concluded by reiterating that Emergency reflected the failure of individual character and the failure of Indian polity and is a stark reminder that institutions of democracy and democratic values should be continuously strengthened.

10 July 2020: India's Efforts towards Developing a Vaccine to Fight the Coronavirus, by Prof. K Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, GOI

The talk began with highlighting the importance of development of Science and Technology in the country; China's example was cited. Its salience in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis was also pointed out. The matter of S&T going 'cyber physical' and how India can be among the few countries to play a major role in it was discussed. Key developments in this regard were spelt out as: bringing in traditional manufacturing back, the manner in which our industries came together to respond to COVID-19 and the promising vaccine development process.

The PSA then discussed the COVID-19 pandemics in the context of pandemics in general and the increasing intensity of human interaction with various animals and birds in the present times. In the Q&A session, he proposed partnerships between private sector, MSMEs and R&D as imperative for the India to flourish. Push to Startups by relating to market ecosystem, strong academic as well as industrial links, investment and mentorship, and deep-tech entrepreneurship were recommended for enabling instead of micro-managing by the government.

13 August 2020: Ayodhya Movement and National Polity

Dr Arvind Gupta started by remarking how the Ayodhya movement, a long-festering wound in our polity, will finally be a thing of the past with the construction of the temple underway. Shri Gurumurthy then gave his talk delving into the intricate history of the Ayodhya movement and its misinterpretations by those who are of left/liberal persuasion. He saw it as a movement brought durability to national polity which had been lost in vote bank politics in the sense that it redefined the minority-centric secular India into an inclusive secular India and so restored the civilisational nationalistic character of India, thus breaking a fixation with the past and a main roadblocks on the path to secularism.

The issue at hand, Shri Gurumurthy stated, was never Hindu vs Muslims as blown out by the leftists. In fact, construction of mosques in predominantly Hindu neighbourhoods aimed to relay the message that an imperial ruler was in power. To that extent the spirit behind reconstruction of the Somnath temple was indicative, he said.

11 September 2020: The Contemporary Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Message

Swami Sarvapriyananda, Minister & Spiritual Leader, Vedanta Society of New York was the main speaker. The event began with him explaining three main aspects of Swami Vivekananda's message, two of which were relevant for the world as a whole and one that was specifically relevant for India. The first of these was that of harmony

of religions and religious tolerance, the purpose of religion being the same as the purpose of life i.e. the manifestation of the divinity already within us. The second explanation was on the concept of a universal religion or Vedanta and the matter of consciousness from its perspective. The third explanation delved into the different definitions of enlightenment in every religion and that Hinduism and Buddhism took a lot of knowledge and teachings from each other.

The Vimarsh concluded with the message that, ultimately all religions, while they sound different, all lead to the same point i.e. enlightenment.

5 October 2020: Raja and Praja in the Mahabharata

The Vimarsh was addressed by Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. According to him, during the ancient times, raja referred to a king who was able to delight his subjects and praja referred to the subjects. In modern day, one might say that the government plays the role of the raja and the citizens play the role of praja. The raja was expected to uphold and protect the core elements of governance to maintain peace and stability in the rajya from the generated revenue.

Speaking of governance indicators, Dr. Debroy explained that citizens want the government to do a limitless number of things without recognising that governments have limited fiscal and administrative capacity. There may be therefore a requirement for prioritization and alternate means of meeting requirements. Clean water from wells etc. instead of piped water was cited as example.

He then explained the salience of Itihasa, e.g., Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Rigveda and, Bhagavad Gita which cover various aspects and ways of life. Finally, new ideas to understand how our ancient civilisations facilitated communication between the raja and praja were discussed.

23 November 2020: India's Digital Leap Forward

Shri Ram Sewak Sharma, former Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), was the guest speaker in this Vimarsh. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF, set the stage with his introductory remark highlighting how the digital leap plays an essential role in transforming India in every domain.

While narrating the Digital India programme's journey, Shri R S Sharma spoke of three essential components: digital infrastructure as a utility to citizens; software and services; and citizens' empowerment. He further categorised India's 'Digital Leap' into: i) India's Digital Leapfrog; ii) Challenges of Big Tech Era; and iii) The Way Forward. Public Digital Infrastructure, the trinity of Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile and data empowerment and protection architecture were then elucidated. Finally, the challenges of a big tech era and the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 were explained by mentioning the malpractices and monopolies of big tech companies and their digital colonization. Shri R S Sharma suggested design and implementation of open protocols and APIs that enable open, free, and fair competition for digital companies across sectors. That way digital infrastructure and institutional mechanisms can

provide India with hard muscle and soft power globally in a digital age.

29 December 2020: National Security Challenges and Air Power

The Vimarsh talk by the Air Chief Staff was the first in a series on our armed forces for 2020-2021. In his address, the CAS highlighted the role and capabilities of the IAF; he also delved into India's evolving threat spectrum. The strategic environment in the world and India at the present constitute of the pandemic, rebalancing of power centres, threats from China, transnational terrorism, polarization, extremist ideologies and the general flux all around, he said. These threats manifest in the Indian Ocean, land borders in the sub-continent, and electro-magnetic sphere and information domain, he added. Finally, the Air Chief elucidated on the importance of Air Power as the first tool of response in any contingency, growth of the nation's arsenal, emphasis on identifying and procuring critical technologies, and research, development and procurement of indigenous technology military equipment. The address was very well received and followed by a free-wheeling interactive session in virtual mode.

21 January 2021: Changing Contours of Competition and Conflict - Implications for Indian Navy

Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff began with the concept of conflict viewed as a binary of war or peace being replaced by a competition continuum across all elements of national power, i.e. Diplomacy, Military, Information and Economics. The tactics of

grey zone operations, hybrid warfare, fait accompli, incrementalism, intimidation, salami slicing to make incremental gains, and emergence of new actors such as cyber troops, maritime militia, wolf warrior diplomats, proxy forces etc. were elaborated in that context. Disastrous outcomes for countries lagging in technology and concepts of disruptive technologies, unmanned systems, drones, space, cyber etc. was also prophesied.

Next, the CNS depicted the challenges facing Indian strategic space along the LAC and the Indian Ocean, and significance of cooperation by Blue Economy, connectivity, trade, maritime security etc. in dealing with great power competition and inter and intra-state conflicts in the region. The role of Indian Navy in leveraging India's dominating geography in the maritime domain, and so to enhance our CNP while addressing the competition in the maritime neighbourhood was highlighted.

21 January 2021: India-Bangladesh Relations: Opportunities and Challenges

Introducing the speaker Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P. State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF, stated that India-Bangladesh relations are diversified and strategic, and the last decade has been a golden phase of the relationship.

Md. Alam appreciated the multidimensional relationship of the two countries - geographically contiguous and sharing common ecosystems. He pointed out that the relations are rooted in history and tradition the genesis of which lay in War of Liberation in 1971, and the tangible results in

various areas, such as resolving land and maritime boundaries, energy, telecommunications, ICT and many more have been built on mutual confidence and trust. To reap benefits of the opportunities, he suggested, it is important to synergise efforts in the field of trade and investments. A strong and vibrant India offers immense opportunities for Bangladesh to develop to be the second largest economy in South Asia after India. He further suggested that the two countries need to focus on priority areas, and should resolve pending issues concerning sharing of waters, resolving continental shelf issue in the Bay of Bengal, bringing down border incidents to zero, and managing the media. Leveraging bilateral relations with Bangladesh's strategic location, enhancement of connectivity projects, and finally, the need to formalise strategic dialogue, i.e. track one, one and a half and track two diplomacies, to discuss sensitive issues like Pakistan and China was alluded to.

24 February 2021: Role of the Indian Army in dealing with the Contemporary National Security Challenges

Speaking of the developing security mosaic, the Army Chief **General Manoj Mukund Naravane PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC** elaborated how the Indian Army is shaping up and its contributions towards nation building. Starting with the impact of emerging technologies on the character of war, he explained the evolution of Defence Cyber Agency, drone technology and long range vectors to address the kinetic and non-kinetic means of warfare. Absorption of niche technologies of AI, autonomous systems, long range precision technology, Internet of Things, 5G, quantum

computing and directed energy weapons was brought out as were the efforts of the Army towards hand holding of indigenous industry, contracts with defence start-ups, IITs and Incubation Centres, and exploitation of the IDEX platform.

The General then touched upon the challenges of budget vis-a-vis capability enhancement, overcoming foreign dependence and alignment with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Next, operations of the adversary in space, cyber and information domains and their influence on our force-structuring and capability development was elucidated. The talk concluded with the mention of assistance provided to civilian authorities as well as friendly foreign countries in handling the national calamities such as Covid pandemic, oil fields fires, floods, cyclones etc.

claims made in reports.

The talk generated good interest, and there were many points of discussion.

30 March 2021: Defining Democracy

In the context of adverse propaganda by vested interest groups questioning the functioning of Indian democracy, Dr A Surya Prakash, an expert on issues related to Indian politics & constitution and Chairperson of the Prasar Bharti was invited to be the guest speaker. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF chaired the session.

Reiterating Foreign Ministry's stance that India has robust institutions and well established democratic practices and did not need sermons especially from those who cannot get their basics right, Dr Surya Prakash pointed out that the rankings provided by the adverse reports were unjustified; some have placed Indian democracy below some of the countries which do not even practice democracy or a secular order! He then articulated his arguments to thoroughly reject the

Our Exchanges Worldwide

*Think Tanks, Institutions, Universities with whom VIF
had Exchanges during 2020-21*

Australia

- Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
- Australian National University (ANU)

China

- Research Institute for Indian Ocean Economies (RIIOE), Yunnan University of Finance and Economics
- National Institute of International Strategy (NIIS) of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
- Center for South Asia & West China Cooperation & Development (SAWCCAD), Sichuan University

Israel

- The Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs (JCPA)

Japan

- The Japan Foundation Asia Center
- Nikkei Inc.
- The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- Koyasan University

- Tohoku University

- The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)

Jordan

- West Asia-North Africa Institute

Myanmar

- Myanmar Institute of Peace & Security (MIPS)
- Thayninga Institute for Strategic Studies (TISS)

Russia

- Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)
- Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS)

Singapore

- NUS Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS)

South Korea

- Korean National Diplomatic Academy

Sri Lanka

- Pathfinder Foundation

Taiwan

- The Prospect Foundation
- Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

UK

- Institute of International & Strategic Studies (IISS)

USA

- The Atlantic Council
- The Heritage Foundation
- US-India Security Council Inc. (USISC)

Uzbekistan

- Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS) under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies
- Center for International Relations Studies (CIRS)
- The University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED)
- Development Strategy Center (DSC)

Vietnam

- The Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam)

Indian Universities

- Gorakhpur University
- Amity University

Other Institutions

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

VIF Family

One word of truth can never be lost; for ages it may be hidden under rubbish, but it will show itself sooner or later. Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible, purity is indestructible.

- Swami Vivekananda

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Amb TCA Rangachari (Former Ambassador to France & Germany)

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Lt Gen Davinder Kumar, PVSM, VSM (Bar) (Former SO-in-C)

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Amb Anil Wadhwa (Former Ambassador to Italy, Poland, Oman & Thailand)

Amb Asoke Mukerji (Former Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations)

Amb Dinkar P Srivastava (Former Indian Ambassador to Iran)

Amb Anil Trigunayat (Former Ambassador to Jordan, Libya & Malta)

Lt Gen Anil Ahuja, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM & BAR (Former Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff)

Lt Gen VK Saxena, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Former DG, Air Defence, Indian Army)

Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM (Member, National Security Advisory Board, Former C&C Western & Eastern Naval Command)

Lt Gen JP Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff & Advisor to DRDO)

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Amit Cowshish (Former Additional Controller General of Defence Accounts)

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DP Singh (Eminent Lawyer)

Dr V Anantha Nageswaran (Non-Permanent Member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council)

Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma (Former Adjutant General of Indian Army)

Prof Srikanth Kondapalli (Professor in Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Amb Arun K Singh (Former Ambassador to US, Russia and Israel)

Dr Gulshan Rai (Former National Cyber Security Coordinator)

Professor Dr. (Ms.) Shashiprabha Kumar (Dean, Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan)

Amb P S Raghavan (Former Chairman (2016-20) National Security Advisory Board)

Lt Gen (Dr) Ranbir Singh, PVSM, AVSM**, YSM, SM, (Retd) (Former Army Commander, Northern Command and Deputy COAS & DGMO)

Research

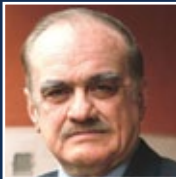
Director

Dr Arvind Gupta (IFS Retd)

(Former Deputy National Security Advisor)



Centre Heads**



Lt General RK Sawhney, PVSM, AVSM

Centre Head & Senior Fellow National Security & Strategic Studies
(Former Deputy Chief of the Army Staff & Former DGMI)

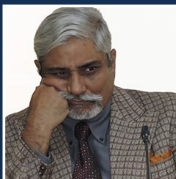


Dr Sreeradha Datta

Centre Head & Senior Fellow Neighbourhood Studies

* * Director VIF is currently the Head of all the other Centres

Web Editor



Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee, PVSM, AVSM, YSM

(Former Chief of Staff, Central Command)

Consultants



Tilak Devasher

(Pakistan)



Maj Gen PK Mallick

(Cyber Security & China)

Senior Fellows



Brig Vinod Anand
(Defence Studies, China
& Myanmar)

RNP Singh
(Indian Political Thought)



Naval Jagota
(Defence Studies)

Shashank Sharma
(Defence Studies)

Associate Fellows



Prerna Gandhi
(Japan, ASEAN & Korea)

Himani Pant
(EU, Russia & US)



PK Khup Hangzo
(Internal Security & Non-
traditional Security Threats)

Soumya Awasthi
(Religion)

Research Associates



Samir Bhattacharya
(Africa)

Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta
(Central Asia)



Hirak Jyoti Das
(West Asia)

Anurag Sharma
(Terrorism & Cyber Security)



Amruta Karambelkar
(Indo-Pacific)

Cchavi Vasisht
(Neighbourhood)



Aakriti Vinayak
(Pakistan)

Kota Mallikarjuna Gupta
(China)

Heena Samant
(Climate Change &
Databases)

Sarada Subhash
(National Security Journal)

Avantika Menon
(Indo-Pacific)

Rishi Gupta
(Nepal)

Rishika Dhumal
(Historical Studies)

Anushka Saraswat
(International Relations)

Aman Kumar
(Koreas & Indo-Pacific)

Abhyoday Sisodia
(Neighbourhood Studies)

Rohith Krishna
(Historical Studies)

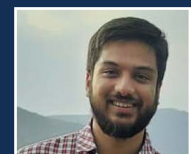
Thejus Gireesh
(Indo-Pacific)

Aniruddha Awalgaonkar
(Bangladesh)

Research Assistants



Young Professionals



Administration



Anuttama Ganguly
(Secretary, VIF)

Manash Bhattacharjee
(Assistant Secretary)



Administration Team

Abhinandan Rai (Asst. Administrative officer)	Krishan Redhu (IT & Web Manager)	Ramphal Vashisth (Personal Assistant)	Alka Sahasrabudhe (Front Office In-charge)	Kamal Singh (Executive Assistant)
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Resource Research Centre & Library

Jyoti Kumar Consultant (Library)	Abhijit Biswas (Library & Web Coordinator)	Manisha Bhadula (Library Assistant)
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Office Assistants

Christopher Francis	Naresh Singh	Naresh Kumar
Kishore Kumar	Keshab Sharkee	

Scholars Outreach

Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. **Book Review** 'Krishnan Srinivasan, James Mayall, Sanjay Pulipaka (Eds.), Values in Foreign Policy: Investigating Ideals and Interests (London, Rowman& Littlefield International, 2019) ', Published in Indian Foreign Affairs Journal, May 2020.
2. 'दुनिया में भारत की बढ़ती जगह', Published in Live Hindustan.com, 03 June 2020
3. 'A new approach in ties needed in the India-China border tension', Published in Deccan Herald, 25 June 2020.
4. 'कहीं हमसे दूर न हो जाए पड़ोसी', Published in Dhaka Tribune, 01 August 2020.
5. 'इस सहमति में कई पेच हैं' Published in Live Hindustan.com, 11 September 2020.
6. 'India favours gradual evolution of the Quad', Published in Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, 22 October 2020.
7. 'Australia joining the Malabar exercises will strengthen the Quad', Published in Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, 26 October 2020.
8. 'कहीं दोस्त, तो कहीं दुश्मन', Published in Live Hindustan, 18 November 2020.

Participation in Conferences

1. Attended the webinar organised by CENJOWS on 'Cyber-Information Warfare'and spoke on 'The International image', 09 August 2020.

2. Online discussion with Narender Kukreti Dy. General Manager Toyota Kirloskar Motors on 'Electric Vehicle', 11 August 2020.
3. Online discussion with Maj Gen AK Channan, Additional Director General in Perspective Planning Directorate and head of Army Design Bureau on 'How to take ahead the policy directive of Athamanirbhar Bharat in Defence', 11 August 2020.
4. Attended as Chief Guest (Keynote speaker) the National Webinar on 'India's National Security Challenges in the Contemporary Times', organised by Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Motihari Bihar, 18 August 2020.
5. Chaired a session on the topic 'ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI): Complementarities and Cooperation'organised by ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), 21 August 2020.
6. Participated in a Panel discussion during the book launch of the book 'Making India Great : The Promise of a Reluctant Global Power' authored by Dr Aparna Pandey, 26 August 2020.
7. Participated in International webinar on 'Gandhi and the World' organized by ICWA, 01 October 2020.
8. Delivered a talk on 'National Security' at SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, 12 October 2020.
9. Participated as 'Guest Speaker' for 'Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Jayanti Celebrations', Durban, South Africa, 29 October 2020.
10. Participated in the workshop on the theme 'Internal Security Challenges and Responses of Modi Years ' at JNU, 05 November 2020.

11. Participated in the Virtual Dialogue on 'India-China Relations: Recent Developments ' at IDSA, 20 November 2020
12. Participated in the CII Task Force meeting on 'IndiaDigital Infrastructure', 27 November 2020.
13. Delivered Keynote address on 'How Indo-China Relationship is emerging?', organised by 5th India Global Summit, 28 November 2020.
14. Spoke on 'Vasudhiava Ktumbakam: Ideas for new multilateralism' at the webinar on 'Multilateralism in a Transforming World: Challenges & Opportunities for India', organised by ICWA, 10 December 2020.
15. Attended interaction on 'US Foreign Policy', at the NSAB Wilson Center, 10 December 2020.
16. Participated in the webinar on 'Pakistan's foreign relations', organised by CAPS, 11 December 2020.
17. Participated in the 3-day FICCI's 93rd Annual convention and Annual EXPO 2020 'Inspired India', 11-14 December 2020.
18. Delivered a Keynote address on 'Contours of Emerging Geopolitical world Order: Implication for India' organised by Strve, Lucknow, 10 January 2021.
19. Participated in the Virtual meeting on 'Possibility of setting up fab in India' organised by NITI Aayog, 13 Januray 2021.
20. Spoke at the Plenary Session on 'Building Cooperation between European and South Asian Think Tanks' in the virtual 'EU-SAARC Think Tank Summit 2021', 20 January 2021.
21. Attended the Date debate on (Astronomical Dating: 3000+ BCE -VS -1000+ BCE) TITHI SHASTRARTH, 23 January 2021.
22. Participated in the eighth session of the Heart of Asia Society's Track 2 Dialogue Series 'Building a Peaceful Afghanistan: Regional and International Support for Afghan Peace', 27 January 2020.
23. Delivered a keynote address on 'India's Internal Security Overview' in the seminar on 'Dousing the Embers: India's Internal Security in the Next Decade' organised by, DSSC Wellington, 28 January 2021.
24. Participated in the webinar on 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' organised by Synergia Foundation, 30 January 2021.
25. Attended VKIC Foundation day Celebration organised by VKIC Guwahati, 31 January 2021.
26. Delivered a talk on 'Role of Technology in India's National Security Strategy' at NIAS, Bangalaore, 11 February 2021.
27. Delivered a keynote address on 'Information Warfare' at DSSC, Wellington, 18 February 2021.
28. Participated in a Panel discussion on 'Future Mantras for the CRPF: the Changing dynamic of internal security' at CRPF seminar on CRPF Veteran Day, 19 February 2021.
29. Delivered a talk on 'India's Track 1.5 and Track 2.0 Diplomacy' at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, 1 March 2021.
30. Delivered a speech in Second meeting of Tehran Dialogue Forum webinar on 'Regional Dynamics'organised by the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), 16 March 2021.
31. Participated in a seminar on a book, 'A Matter of Trust: India-US Relations from Truman to Trump' organised by Centre for Social and Economic Progress, 16 March 2021.
32. Delivered special Address in the Technical Session on 'Cooperation and Capacity Building in the Indo-Pacific', Assocham, 18 March 2021.
33. Round table discussion on 'Quad's Relevance to Indo-Pacific Security order in the Post-Pandemic World'organised by USANAS Foundation, 21 March 2021.
34. Attended the CII Taskforce meeting onDigital Infrastructure organised by CII, 14 March 2021.

35. Attended the 9th session of Track 2 dialogue 'Building a Peaceful Afghanistan: Regional & International Support for Afghan Peace Process' organised by Heart of Asia Society, 31 March 2021.

Television Appearances

1. Discussion on 'Gandhi and the World' at RSTV, 02 October 2020.
2. Discussion on 'The Big Picture: 75 Years of the UN' at RSTV, 24 October 2020.
3. Discussion on 'The Big Picture: Gilgit-Baltistan An Integral Part of India' at RSTV, 02 November 2020.
4. Discussion on 'The Big Picture : SCO Heads of Government Summit' at RSTV, 30 November 2020.
5. Discussion on 'India joins UN Security Council' at RSTV, 4 January 2021.
9. Talk on 'अभी कहना मुश्किल है कि दिल्ली धमाके के पीछे कौन है?' at ABP NEWS, 31 January 2021.

Dr Sreeradha Datta, Centre Head & Senior Fellow, Neighbourhood Studies, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Public health South Asia needs to pay more attention to public health; SAARC needs to pool health resources', Published in South Asia Monitor, 23 April 2020.
2. 'India-Bangladesh Waterway Project will Herald a New Chapter in Bilateral Cooperation', Published in South Asia Monitor, 1 June 2020.
3. 'India's Public Health Sector and Its Global Outreach During Covid 19', Published in World Focus, June 2020.
4. 'Can Aggressive Posturing be the New Normal', Published in Dhaka Tribune, 23 June 2020.
5. 'Why South Asia can't work together', Published in Dhaka Tribune, 14 July 2020

6. 'China Nepal Pakistan Afghanistan Meeting ', Published in BBC Bangla news, 28 July 2020.
7. Bangladesh the Much-Coveted Neighbour, Published in ISAS Insight, 4 August 2020.
8. India's Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges', Book (Co-edited)' Orient Blackswan, 26 August 2020.
9. 'Towards a Durable Political Understanding: Fifty Years of Indo-Bangladesh Relations', Published in Indian Foreign Affairs Journal Vol. 15, No. 3, July–September 2020.
10. Briefing Paper, 'Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project: Navigating Myanmar's Ethnic Conundrum', Published in CUTS International, September 2020.
11. 'Why Myanmar's Elections Matter?', Published in 9Dash Line, 1 October 2020.
12. Chapter in book, 'Pandemic through the Windows,' In Imtiaz Ahmed edited COVID 19 The Otherside of Living Through the Pandemic, Patha Samabesh, Dhaka 2021.
13. 'India's Engagement with the Neighborhood Through the Pandemic Phase' Published in Journal of Governance, Security & Development Volume 1 | Number 2 . 01 Jan 2021.
14. 'River and coastal connectivity: Indo Bangladesh Perspective', Published in PAAL vol. 4 (1) Jan 2021.
15. 'Modi visit to Bangladesh: Much to celebrate amid hard political realities', Published in South Asia Monitor, 28 March 2021.

Participation in Conferences

1. Spoke on 'BIMSTEC Cooperation in COVID-19 Era', at Asian Confluence - RIS, 20 May 2020.
2. Spoke on 'Covid 19 Pandemic in South Asia', at Unanyan Onneshan, Dhaka, 16 June 2020.
3. Spoke on 'COVID-19 and EU-South Asia Relations', at AIDIA & South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) 4 June 2020.

4. Spoke on 'Women and Work in South Asia', at Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, 10 July 2020.
5. Spoke at the India-Bangladesh in International Conference on 'India and her neighbours', at Maharana Pratap PG College, Gorakhpur, 30 August 2020.
6. Spoke on 'Understanding COVID-19 Pandemic', at Centre of Genocide and Governance, 28 September 2020.
7. Discussion on Briefing Paper – 'Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project: Navigating Myanmar's Ethnic Conundrum', 1 October 2020.
8. Spoke on 'Recent Developments in Myanmar', at Tilottoma Foundation, 10 February 2021.
9. Spoke at CUTS webinar on 'Border Haats: An opportunity to strengthen cross-border value chains between India and Bangladesh', 11 February 2021.
10. Spoke on 'India Deepening ties with Neighbours: Examining the Possibilities Ahead', at Central University of Gujarat, 17 February 2021.
11. Spoke on 'Act East and Northeast India', at Manipal Academy of Higher Education, 18 February 2021.
12. Spoke on 'India's neighbourhood', at Kottayam University College, 19 February 2021.
13. Spoke on 'Regional Connectivity in Bay of Bengal', at South Asia Network of Economic Modelling, 21 February 2021.
14. Spoke on 'Regional Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal: The Role of Energy Security and Maritime Governance in Promoting Integration', at ESI-ISAS Roundtable, 11 March 2021.
15. Spoke on 'Golden Jubilee Celebration of Bangladesh', at India International Centre, 25 March 2021.

Brig Vinod Anand, Senior Fellow, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'India-Vietnam Virtual Summit December 2020: An Assessment', Published in Diplomatist, 30 December 2020.

Television Appearances

1. Participated in panel discussion on 'India Vietnam Relations' at RSTV, 21 Dec 2020.

Maj Gen P K Mallick, VSM (Retd), Consultant, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Chinese Intransigence in Ladakh: An Overview (Vol No 2 –2020)', Published in The United Service Institution of India, 7 February 2021.

Soumya Awasthi, Associate Fellow, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'India and SAARC Combating COVID Pandemic', Published in Bangladesh Institute for Peace and Security, BIPSS, 1 May 2020.

Dr Pravesh Gupta - Research Associate, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'COVID-19 Pandemic in Iran and its Impact on Healthcare and Economy', Published in The Diplomatist, 05 May 2020.
2. 'US-Taliban Peace Deal and its Implications for Central Asia', Published in Diplomatist, 16 May 2020.
3. 'India's Medical Diplomacy in Central Asia amid COVID-19', Published in Diplomacy & Beyond Plus, 25 June 2020.

4. 'India's Policy Towards Central Asia: An Appraisal', Published in The Diplomatist, 26 August 2020.
5. 'A Case of Permanent Neutrality and Preventive Diplomacy', Published in special Edition of Business Central Asia magazine, 31 August 2020.
6. 'Role of Uzbekistan in Promoting Regional Connectivity', Published in Diplomacy India & Sarkaritel.com, 24 September 2020.

Participation in Conferences

1. Spoke in a webinar on 'The leadership phenomenon of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – H.E. Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev' organised by Embassy of Kazakhstan in India, 06 July 2020.
2. Presentation titled 'Key Foreign Policy priorities of a renewed Uzbekistan' at the discussion on the 29th Anniversary of the Independence of Uzbekistan: Development Strategy of a Renewed Uzbekistan' organised by Embassy of Uzbekistan in New Delhi and Tillotoma Foundation, Kolkata 28 August 2020.
3. Presentation on 'Cultural Diplomacy as a factor in India's Soft Power in Afghanistan' in an International Conference organised by the Centre for Persian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 23 March 2021.

Anurag Sharma - Research Associate, VIF

Participation in Conferences

1. Presentation titled 'Cyber-Terrorism: An Emerging Threat in Cyberspace' at The Open University, England, the United Kingdom, 27 October 2020.

Cchavi Vasisht, Research Associate, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. Research Paper 'Perceptions & Awareness in the Times of Coronavirus Crises: An Analysis of Media Reports ', (Paper published in Sambhāsan (A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Bilingual Interdisciplinary Journal of the University of Mumbai, Volume 1 Issue 2), June 2020.
2. Article 'India-Myanmar Relations: An Analysis of Connectivity Diplomacy', Published in The Kootneeti, 03 September 2020.

Participation in Conferences

1. Presented a Research Paper on 'Polarization of Gender Identities: Understanding the Role of Media in India' in SPARC Research Project: Who Bridges Across Social Divides?, 12 July 2020.
2. Delivered expert lecture on 'Sociological Theories' in Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU) for their 3rd Semester students of B.Voc. (Public Services), 5 August 2020.
3. Delivered expert lecture on 'Sociological Theories' in Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU) for their 3rd Semester students of B.Voc. (Public Services), 22 August 2020.

Amruta Karambelkar, Research Associate, VIF

Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'QUAD May Not Resolve All of India's Security Concerns, But It Is Headed in The Right Direction ', (Published in SWARAJYA) 28 October 2020.

Top 5 Articles | Commentaries

(based on Views and Downloads)

S. No	Title	Author	Views
1	India-China Face Off- Has China Committed a Faux Pas?	Amb Kanwal Sibal	11748
2	कोविड-19 संकट का वैश्विक प्रभाव	Arvind Gupta	11729
3	Denigrating Prime Minister Modi's Policies in Foreign Journals to Serve Domestic Political Purpose	Amb Kanwal Sibal	10124
4	Truth vs. Reality: Unshackling the Burdens of Intrigue in Kashmir	Col. DPK Pillai	9059
5	Decoding India-China Standoff at the LAC	Lt Gen AS Bedi	7110

Top 5 videos watched

S. No	Title	Views
1	29 December 2020 Vimarsh on National Security Challenges and Air Power by Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria , PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC, Chief of the Air Staff	3,844
2	24 February 2020 Vimarsh on Role of the Indian Army in dealing with the Contemporary National Security Challenges by General Manoj Mukund Naravane , PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC (Chief	2,592
3	11 September 2020 Vimarsh on The Contemporary Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's Message by Swami Sarvapriyananda , Minister & Spiritual Leader, Vedanta Society of New York	2,462
4	12 October 2020 Talk on India as a Civilizational State and its Impact on India's Strategic Outlook & World View by Shri S Gurumurthy , Chairman, VIF	1750
5	13 August 2020 Vimarsh on Ayodhya Movement and National Polity by Shri S Gurumurthy , Economic & Political Analyst and Chairman, VIF.	1533

*When the real history of India will be unearthed,
it will be proved that, as in matters of religion,
so in fine arts, India is the primal Guru of the
whole world.*

- Swami Vivekananda

Finances

VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

3, Institutional Area, San Martin Marg,
Chanakyaपुरी, New Delhi - 110 021

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 2021.

PARTICULARS	SCHEDULE	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Corpus & Non-Corpus Fund	"A"	13,302,097.76	19,242,348.01
TOTAL ::		Rs. <u>13,302,097.76</u>	Rs. <u>19,242,348.01</u>
APPLICATION OF FUNDS			
Fixed Assets	"B"	6,611,173.00	7,825,489.00
Investment	"C"	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00
Current Assets	"D"		
- Advances, Deposits & Receivables		873,409.00	742,855.00
- Cash & Bank Balances		6,080,647.68	9,171,394.72
		<u>6,956,056.68</u>	<u>9,914,249.72</u>
Less: Current Liabilities	"E"		
- Other Liabilities		2,265,131.92	497,390.71
		<u>2,265,131.92</u>	<u>497,390.71</u>
		4,690,924.76	9,416,859.01
TOTAL ::		Rs. <u>13,302,097.76</u>	Rs. <u>19,242,348.01</u>
Notes on Accounts and Significant Accounting Policies	"F"		

Signed in terms of our Report of even date.
For PUROHIT & PUROHIT (FRN:003282N)
Chartered Accountants

CA. K.K. Purohit
CA. K.K. Purohit, B.Com(Hons), LL.B, FCA, MBF, ISA
Partner
Membership No.054763



For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Dr. Arvind Gupta
Dr. Arvind Gupta
Director

Kishor Tokekar
Kishor Tokekar
Managing Trustee

Anuttama
Anuttama Ganguly
Secretary

New Delhi, Monday, The 05th day of July, 2021.



VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

3, Institutional Area, San Martin Marg,
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110 021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 2021.

PARTICULARS	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
[A] INCOME		
Donations	28,000,000.00	36,000,000.00
Bank Interest	522,344.00	894,264.00
Publications Royalty	157,369.00	39,422.00
Other Interest - IT Refund	10,930.00	-
Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	5,940,250.25	8,531,843.85
TOTAL ::	Rs. 34,630,893.25	Rs. 45,465,529.85
[B] EXPENDITURE		
Audit Fees	64,900.00	64,900.00
Bank Commission & Charges	2,344.56	8,588.08
Conferences, Seminars, Vimarsha & Other Activities	756,391.00	3,318,632.00
Corona Preventive Expenses	72,613.00	20,849.00
Depreciation	1,204,317.00	1,458,768.00
Gardening Expenses	507,002.00	681,630.00
General up-keep and Cleaning Expenses	2,289,276.00	2,609,994.00
History Project Expenses	974,024.00	292,363.00
Honorarium, Salaries, Fees & Stipend	21,616,343.00	22,539,454.00
Initiative on Conflict Avoidance & Environment Conciousness-HBC	-	4,963,853.00
Insurance Charges	3,215.00	3,310.00
Interest on TDS	-	1.00
Legal & Professional Fees	53,100.00	63,425.00
Library Expenses	1,479,401.00	1,856,693.00
Office Expenses	155,541.00	300,152.00
Postage & Courier Charges	76,694.00	49,850.00
Power, Fuel Charges & Expenses	1,663,222.69	2,173,411.04
Printing & Stationery	134,437.00	370,640.00
Publication Expenses	748,541.00	1,176,057.00
Pre-fabricated Cabins Dismantled	59,028.00	-
Repairing & Maintenance Expenses	545,295.00	994,192.00
Security Services Expenses	1,342,972.00	1,402,233.00
Telephone, Mobile & Internet Expenses	179,902.00	179,156.00
Travelling & Conveyance Exp.	67,042.00	579,427.73
Water Charges	239,589.00	41,811.00
Website Renewal & Maintenance Charges	395,703.00	316,140.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year	-	-
TOTAL ::	Rs. 34,630,893.25	Rs. 45,465,529.85
Notes on Accounts and Significant Accounting Policies	"E"	

Signed in terms of our Report of even date.

For PUROHIT & PUROHIT (FRN:003282N)

Chartered Accountants

CA. K.K. Purohit, B.Com(Hons), LL.B, FCA, MBE, ISA

Partner

Membership No.054763



For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Dr. Anand Gupta
Director

Kishor Tokekar
Managing Trustee

Anuttama
Anuttama Ganguly
Secretary



New Delhi, Monday, The 05th day of July, 2021.

*Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders.
Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this.
Put yourselves to the task. Lord Bless you.*

Swami Vivekananda



VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

3, San Martin Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021

Tel: 011-24121764, 24106698 • Fax: 011-66173415

E-mail: info@vifindia.org, Website: www.vifindia.org

Follow us on [twitter@vifindia](https://twitter.com/vifindia)