



**Vivekananda  
International  
Foundation**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

2019-20

*Seeking Harmony in Diversity*



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Vivekananda  
International  
Foundation

ॐ सहनाववतु ।	O Lord! Protect us together,
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।	nurture us together.
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।	May we work together.
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु ।	May our studies be illuminated.
मा विद्विषावहै ।	May we not have discord.
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥	May there be peace, peace and peace.

**(Katha Upanishad | Shanti Mantra)**

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**VIVEKANANDA  
INTERNATIONAL  
FOUNDATION**



# Annual Report | 2019-20



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 Foreword

The year 2019-20 under report has been a big turning point -- and a high vantage point to look back at the decades that have passed by -- both in Indian polity and in geo-politics parallelly and together. The year under report and the year that is running will be recalled for a long time in the future history of India and the world as one that changed the paradigm of both as well as the post-Cold War world order, perhaps as some say, forever.



Before I share my thoughts on the most extraordinary events of the year and in human history, I must first pay my reverential homage to Shri Parameswaran, one of the founders and the first officiating chairman of Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), and also a trustee on its board of trustees, who passed away in February this year. I deem it my duty to recall Shri Parameswaran's not too well-known role in the launch of the VIF. Hailing from Kerala, Shri Parameswaran dedicated his life stretching over the next seven decades, for public service. He inspired thousands for nation-building work. Personally speaking, he inspired me too with his great qualities of head and heart. He was a highly respected intellectual in Kerala and across India. For over a quarter century, and till his end, he was the President of the Vivekananda Kendra (VK), Kanyakumari, a spiritually-oriented service organisation, working extensively in remote North East India, especially in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur. Shri Parameswaran's support as President of the Kendra ensured that the beautiful infrastructure on which the VIF functions today became available to it. Shri Parameswaran was the Guest of Honour at the launch function of the VIF. Both the Kendra and the VIF are inspired by the vision of Swami Vivekananda. The Kendra is guided by the high philosophy of Universal Brotherhood expounded by Vivekananda in his celebrated address at the World Parliament of Religions on September 11, 1893. The Vivekananda Kendra's philosophy

underpins the ancient Indian concepts of Harmony in Diversity and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which is the vision of the VIF for a harmonious world order.

Next, on behalf of the VIF fraternity, I place on record my gratitude to the Director of the VIF, Dr Arvind Gupta, for his outstanding leadership of the foundation, which has energised Team VIF and sustained its harmony, cohesiveness and rigour, and also for the highly informative Annual Report of the VIF for the year 2019-20 that is before us. I must thank VIF experts and scholars for their alert and commendable performance during a momentous and equally tumultuous period in the history of India in the first nine months of the year and in global history in the last quarter of it due to the Covid-19 crisis. No crisis with this kind of comprehensive destruction is recallable in human memory as having descended on the world. I must also thank the Secretary of the VIF, Anuttama Ganguly, for her diligent and efficient organisation and management of the foundation's diverse activities, including the meticulous preparation of the Annual Report.

The continuing and deepening impact of the Covid-19 disaster on health, trade and commerce, the huge questions over the role of China in the spread of the virus across the world, leading to a global inquiry on it, the sudden death of the half-century-old US-China engagement, the huge disturbance in global relations and in multilateral institutions that threatens them to their demise, the unprecedented decoupling of the developed world from China and their consequent focus on India, the sharp deterioration in India-China relations and the bewilderingly untimely, mindless and unwise belligerence of China on Hong Kong and in South China Sea are altering the present world order, and also changing India in relation to it, in an unprecedented manner.

The gigantic shifts in geopolitics and global relations taking place now and the likelihood of more of it in the future, cannot be fathomed without an understanding of the immediate and connected history of how the present world order, which is seen to be changing forever, evolved. It becomes unavoidable to revisit and discuss the post- World War II Cold War world order to know how the present world order was shaped by US/ West, how China gained in the making of it thanks to its timely defection from the socialist bloc by quickly adopting market economy in a Marxian state and how India lost being neither here nor there, by continuing a socialist economy in a democratic state -- the very opposite of China. And these and many more unforeseen and foreseeable developments force a recall of and a revisit to the Cold War past to critically hypothesise the changes taking place in the post-Cold War order. It is also necessary to understand why the post Covid-19 world changes seem to be distancing from an autocratic China and how that shift is turning China against India. Democratic India is likely to move centre stage in the new world order of transparent democracy Vs non- transparent and single party autocracies.

I feel impelled to share -- and request all to bear -- a long narrative that follows this message as **Random Thoughts To Ideate For Exceptional and Extraordinary Times Ahead** to recall the past, to understand the present and to address the future in the context of the dramatic changes taking place in domestic polity and the stunning developments in the world brought on by the advent of the Covid-19 disaster, the fall out of which is perceived by the very authors of the contemporary world order as changing it forever. My endeavour is to think

aloud and to prompt Team VIF to deepen its strategic thinking and exercise on the remaking of the global order which is undoubtedly under way and, more importantly, on the role of India in the making of the new order, and its eventual place in it. The intent of the Random Thoughts that follows the purpose is to promote an informed discussion and debate in the larger national and global interest.

I appeal to the VIF team and fraternity to remain safe even as I request them to keep meticulously following domestic and global developments, and inform and alert their colleagues, the VIF and the national and global community in the larger interest.

And, hoping for a better future ahead for India and the world once the Covid-19 mess is behind us.



**S. Gurumurthy**  
**Chairman, VIF**

August 2020

# Random Thoughts

## To Ideate For Exceptional and Extraordinary Times Ahead

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 anytime before in the past and constitutes perhaps the greatest challenge to the future of humanity. Greater and bigger disasters in scale, natural and man-made, have hit the world in the distant and recent past. 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. The contemporary world was, in some sense, ambitiously integrated and tangled by powerful political actors in the 1990s, based on multilateral political and economic guarantees. The collective multilateral guarantees had conceptually and systemically rendered all past ideas, structures, scales and people's lifestyle outdated and irrelevant, and built a futuristic world order that seemed largely disconnected from the past for most of humanity. It is precisely those fundamental guarantees intended to sustain the contemporary world that now appear to be at risk because of the huge distrust in relations among the high and mighty of the world today. 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. India had for long, till it undertook the risky mission of exploding the atomic device in 1998, been a passive acceptor of rules framed by an oligarchy of powerful nations. It is those rules of the game the world powers set for themselves and for the world, which now seem to be falling apart, calling for a reset out of which would emerge a new world order. That what now appears to be a paradigm shift holds for the immediate and distant future is deeply hidden in the womb of the present, which is incomplete and the future, which is yet to unfold. 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. It equally calls for a deep introspection by India on the opportunities it has missed in the past and the opportunities it has now and should not miss.

## I. India needs to regain its position as a contributor to global commons of ideas

That thinking as a standalone concept without physical power itself was power has been proven in ancient human history. That was how ancient Indian thought drew the attention of the world of thinkers. It was because of the power of Indian thought that great thinkers of the West and the Rest, who explored India, were attracted to it and its civilisation. Ancient India has been celebrated by many great men of the contemporary West as a great exporter and contributor of ideas to the global commons, but contemporary India has largely been

an importer and consumer of ideas in the last several decades, much of which seem to be losing relevance in the present context. A Covid-19 ravaged world, which is running out of ideas, provides both the context and ecosystem for India to regain its position as a contributor of ideas to the world.

It is time to recall India's forgotten virtue as one of the greatest contributors of thoughts of eternal value to the world in ancient and contemporary times. A look back at how great thinkers of the contemporary world looked at India that was not free is necessary to understand where India should rebegin its mission to become a contributor to the world rather than being a consumer that it has been particularly after it attained freedom.

### **Ancient India as a thought giver to the contemporary world**

Here is a brief and illustrative, not exhaustive, account of how the thinking world was attracted to ancient Indian thought and thinkers:

**American scholar Mark Twain:** "India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great-grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."

**American author Henry David Thoreau:** "Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some unearthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, climes and nationalities, and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge. When I read it, I feel that I am under the spangled heavens of a summer night."

**American historian Will Durant:** "India was the motherland of our race and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages. She was the mother of our philosophy; mother through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother through the village community; of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all." "India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of a mature mind, understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love, for all human beings."

**German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer:** "Vedas are the most rewarding and the most elevating book which can be possible in the world." On the Upanishads, he said: "It has been the solace of my life -- it will be the solace of my death."

**German scholar Max Mueller:** "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions, I should point to India." "There is no book in the world that is so thrilling, stirring and inspiring as the Upanishads."

**French Scholar Romain Rolland:** "If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

**British Historian Arnold Toynbee:** “It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way.”

**American Author Ralph Waldo Emerson:** “In the great books of India, an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence, which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the questions that exercise us.”

**Scientist Albert Einstein:** “We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.”

**German Physicist Werner Heisenberg:** “After the conversations about Indian philosophy, some of the ideas of Quantum Physics that had seemed so crazy suddenly made much more sense.”

**Chinese Ambassador to US Hu Shih (1946):** “India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across her border.”

**Biblical scholar and ordained priest Edward Pococke** wrote a book “India in Greece” that India was the origin of the Greek civilisation, Sanskrit, the mother of Greek languages and the Greek mythologies and names of peoples, mountains and rivers explainable only by Indian and Sanskrit names, and finally the forefathers of Greek, known as Pelasgians, ought to have come from Palasa, that is Bihar!

Not an ordinary celebration this, by the conquering races, nations and peoples, of a country that was not even politically free.

### **Exporter and Contributor to Importer and Consumer**

It is matter for introspection for Indian thinkers as to how India, which was a great exporter and contributor to global thought and culture for millennia when it was not a free nation and people, and because of that, it was celebrated by the great minds of the world, has, after it became free, slipped into a one way importer, acceptor and consumer of thoughts generated from outside, almost uncritically. How could India, which was not free, and its education system and public discourse, produce a Swami Vivekananda, Maharishi Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi but independent India and its education system and public discourse could produce none to match them. A profound question indeed to ponder? And, it is equally also a matter for concern and introspection. Is it because India lost its connect with what made the world to look at it and celebrate it, and so lost its position, or is it because the world which celebrated India for the values it had, has changed its own perspectives of what it needs, which is not what it believed India could offer? A close look at India within and at the world outside seems to answer both questions in the affirmative.

## **Post World War II World changed and Independent India did not**

It is undeniably true that India in its quest for economic development for which the West had emerged as the model, appeared to blame its past for all of its present problems and was keen to disconnect from it. It is equally true that after World War II, the world had shifted to the idea of power -- military, political and economic -- over thought, and by the end of the Cold War, to the idea of power without principles, openly. It is in this game of power that an independent India further lost out. Why? Independent India instead of changing to match and suit the world order based on power, held on to its ancient values of non-violence and attempted to globalise its ancient and pre-Independence idea of non-violence in a world that was ruled by violence, particularly when it was in no position to influence a world ruled by might rather than what was right.

## **India's ambivalence about war and power -- the psyche of Kurukshetra and Kalinga Wars**

Over millennia, India has always had a degree of intellectual ambivalence about war and power. A telling example was the most successful pan-Indian empire builder Emperor Ashoka. Ashoka, who won the Kalinga War, gave up war altogether after seeing the violence it had produced, and became a pacifist. The Ashoka Pillar, with its idea of non-violence, became the brand of independent India. But the Kalinga War was not the only great war in ancient Indian history. India witnessed two great wars -- the Kurukshetra War and the Kalinga War. In Kurukshetra, Arjuna was the warrior, while in Kalinga, Ashoka was the warrior. Arjuna's confused state of mind and distress before the Kurukshetra War matched with Ashoka's ambivalence and pain after the war. Both wars had a deep impact on the Indian psyche. A comparison of the two wars and warriors, and their contrasting psychological outcome, are important to understand the complex and confused Indian psyche about war and violence. The state of mind of Ashoka after the Kalinga War was the same as the state of Arjuna's mind before the Kurukshetra War. Arjuna was in confusion about whether it was right to wage the war he was to wage and Ashoka was in confusion about whether he was right in waging the war that he had waged. It was Krishna, through a long lecture in the Bhagwad Gita, who removed Arjuna's confusion about the need for war, which was a rarity. But there was no Krishna and no one else to remove the confusion of Ashoka, who experienced deep guilt and distress for the war he had waged, about the very need for wars. As the victor, Ashoka gave up war. The Indian psyche was heavily influenced by Ashoka -- to think of wars altogether as an evil and mentally to give it up. A little reflection would have made Indian intellectuals realise that had Ashoka lost the Kalinga War and given up war, he would have never have been a hero, or a model for an independent India. A defeated Ashoka would have had nothing to give up. Only a victor could do what Ashoka did. That was how he became an icon of both victory and peace. Ashoka's non-violence was a victor's philosophy and not a loser's refuge, As Mahatma Gandhi, the contemporary icon of non-violence, asserted that non-violence emerges from strength and courage, not weakness and cowardice. Unfortunately, independent India's psyche was moulded by wrongly construing a victorious Ashoka's non violence as a glorious model for it -- a civilisation wounded by defeats -- and turned not just against the idea of war, but also, against the very idea of having a military itself. As a consequence, independent India did not understand that a nation needed to be battle ready even if it hated wars.

## **Misconstruing Ashoka proved disastrous for Independent India**

The post-Kalinga War Ashokan confusion about the need for wars, rather than the post-Gita clarity of Arjuna to wage wars as an exception, extended via the non-violent freedom movement into Indian statecraft itself post freedom. The first Prime Minister of India did not even believe that India needed an army as, in his view, being committed to non-violence, even lathi-wielding police were sufficient for India. Independent India's leadership never realised that its brand ambassador Ashoka gave up wars but he did not disband his huge military as there is evidence that he used his military might to continue putting down rebellions and for maintaining the peace. Ashoka was battle ready even after he gave up wars. Independent India's Ashokan model of statecraft was sans Ashoka's practical wisdom to have a strong army to ensure non-violence. Anyway, within a couple within of months after the Prime Minister felt India did not need an army, Pakistan invaded Kashmir and alerted him and India to the need for a military to defend its own philosophy of non-violence. Still India, though alerted, did not learn the lesson that the 1948 war had taught it. Very soon its enemies made India understand why and how much an army was needed for it, even to protect India to remain non-violent within and to preach non-violence to a violent world. It took a humiliating defeat and a loss of land equal to the size of Kerala and Tripura put together to China to know the importance of an efficient army to defend an India which did not want to offend anyone.

The impractical idealists who took charge of independent India from the British did not understand that non-violence could perhaps work, though not always, within the borders. But certainly it would not work with an enemy on the border which had no great love for non-violence. Thus not clear about the role of power in national and international statecraft, India kept losing its leverage in the world of power. It was also reflected in India's reservations about being in international positions of power. According to new evidence produced by the Wilson Centre, India turned down the US offer of a permanent UN Security Council seat for it as it did not want it at the cost of China! ["Not at the Cost of China: New Evidence Regarding US Proposals to Nehru for Joining the United Nations Security Council" by Anton Harder, March 2015 Working Paper #76 Wilson Centre]. And this after China had already gobbled up Tibet. India virtually gifted Hanuman's Mace to its enemy! And more, India did not go nuclear earlier than it did, either. A confused and ambivalent India kept escalating the grammar of its non-violent freedom movement to its defence and external policies. Although its adversaries had taught it the inevitability of wars and military strength, having military inevitability is far from acquiring the will to have power in a world of power play. The Ashokan psyche wrongly interpreted by independent India needed a shift which came much later than it should have.

## **Pokhran II -- India's intent to join global power play**

Independent India went wrong in making it explicitly clear to the world that it lacked the sense of power. It is true that Indian civilisation is not a natural power player, like the Abrahamic and Chinese civilisations, which have an inherent agenda to turn the world to their views and build empires. Indian civilisation had never had and will never have the 'Will to Power' which is being talked about in strategic circles in the contemporary world

as a virtue despite its evil origins. The 'Will to Power' strategic idea is sourced in the "drive of the superman in the philosophy of Nietzsche to perfect and transcend the self through the possession and exercise of creative power. It is internal impulse inherent in an aggressive civilisation to conquer the world for itself or for its world view. It actually powered the Nazis in Germany into the Second World War. Indian civilisation has no religion or ideology which impels or mandates it to conquer the world. On the contrary, it is rooted in the converse idea of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, which is based on the conviction that the whole world is one family, rejecting the "them vs us" ideologies. All the efforts of Kautilya, who encountered and understood Alexander and the Greco-Roman conquering mind, to change Indian thinking through his treatise -- the "Arthashastra" -- to build a pan-Indian empire through the use of power failed. Because Kathambari Bana trashed his thoughts as unethical [adharma] and delegitimised once and for all the idea of power in Indian civilisation altogether. Kautilya's efforts to inject a sense of power in Indian civilisation failed against the high sense of values that dominated the Indian mind. Indian civilisation rejected the idea of dominance through physical power. Ancient Indian civilisation also conceptualised comprehensive unconquerable defensive power. The idea that implied a sense of the highest defensive power was in the concept of Ayodhya, which was an adjective that became a proper noun as the capital of Sri Rama. Ayodhya meant that no one could dare think of a war to conquer it, that it was unconquerable. It meant building such a comprehensive national power so that no aggressive force could cast an evil eye on India. It is the very antithesis of the wrongly interpreted Asokan concept of no war because he had given up war. The ancient Indian concept of Ayodhya meant that possessing such comprehensive power; no one could dare launch a war against it.

As the non-violent freedom became too distant from the very idea of power, independent India lost its connect with the comprehensive power philosophy of Ayodhya. Post independence, India lacked strategic thinking, which is a necessary adjunct to power to deal with the world of power. But in the world of today, dominated by power over thinking than by the power of thinking, it is the geo--political space a nation enjoys that draws the world's attention to its thinking and not by the merit of its thinking. This is the world of power that India, which could not come out of the pre-Independence Ashokan paradigm of non-violence, failed to relate to. After four wars forced on it by its adversaries, India made a first and tentative attempt to show it was not averse to power by undertaking the first Pokhran nuclear test in 1974. Realising the huge cost of keeping away from power in a world that respected power more than high values and by exploding atomic devices in 1998, post-Pokhran II India made its intent to join the global power game clear. Pokhran II was India's final departure from its misconstrued Ashokan psyche of dispensing with war and violence altogether. Pokhran II is the recall and reinstatement of the Ayodhya concept in Indian strategic thinking -- that no one should dare to undertake a war of conquest against India.

### **Time for India to prove Warren Hastings wrong and become a contributor to global thought**

Having successfully disconnected itself from its psychological constraints and reservations about power and explicitly announcing to the world that it is keen on acquiring power -- and comprehensive power in the sense of Ayodhya -- India has to reconnect itself to the days when it was the thought giver and contributor to

the world, and not continue to remain an importer and consumer of thoughts generated from outside. It is most appropriate here to recall the words of Warren Hastings (1754-1826), the first governor general of British India. Deeply impressed by and overwhelmed with Hindu philosophy, Hastings wrote a near prophetic and resounding pronouncement on Indian philosophy: *“The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive when the British dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrances.”* (Philosophy of Hinduism - An Introduction - By T. C. Galav, Universal Science-Religion - page 19). Hastings words that the sources of Indian philosophy which yielded the wealth and power of India would be lost to memory would have nearly proved to be true, but for the emergence of Swami Vivekananda, Maharishi Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi, and many others, who shaped the Indian freedom movement along civilisational lines and almost reinstated ancient Indian values. Unfortunately, after the British dominion ceased to exist, independent India failed to reconnect to the sources that those great men revived contrary to Hastings prognosis that they would be consigned to remembrances. It is time that India reconnected itself to its long tradition of being the celebrated contributor to the world commons of ideas, rather than being merely an importer and consumer of ideas generated from outside. The post-Covid-19 world provides India with a unique and historic opportunity to emerge as an idea giver to a new world order even as it follows the counsel of its sages who said thousands of years ago -- “Aano Badraha Krutavao Yantu Vishwatah” -- meaning “Let Noble Thoughts Come To Us From All Sides”.

## **II. The background to Random Thoughts -- Where the world is heading and India's response to it and role in it**

A world, which has run on the West-centric course without course corrections for centuries, seems to be running out of ideas for quite a while. The West, which made the world obsessed with and centered on itself, even went to the extent of declaring almost arrogantly in 1951 through an advisory to underdeveloped nations by the United Nations, that a non-Western society which seeks to develop like the West should copy and emulate the West and cease to be itself. This finally manifested as a universally accepted idea through globalisation. Covid-19 has exposed the hollowness of assumptions of the world order based on Western experiences which were experimented on the Rest from the 1990s, which the Rest, particularly India, accepted uncritically, unlike China, which refused to dismantle its Marxian State to accommodate the Western concept of Market Economy. Instead, it aligned the Marxian State to a Market Economy. When momentous changes were taking place in the world in the 1990s, India, which had not built any significant military or geopolitical power since Independence, was just a rule acceptor -- helplessly following rules framed by the high and mighty. Now, a quarter of a century later, India's stature has altered to its advantage and the global structure and its perceptions about India too have changed. With the Covid-19 threatening to alter the contemporary world order forever, and the democratic world feeling the heat of a non-transparent China it has promoted, the investment India has made in its democratic institutions and rule of law is now both a matter of global attention and attraction. Even the pre-Covid-19 world has begun changing fast, but the post Covid-19 world promises never to be the same as the pre-Covid world.

The bandwidth of the emerging world order triggered by Covid-19 was prophesied by Francis Fukuyama. He postulated in the 1990s a world free of ideological conflicts forever from “erosion of the liberal World order” to “resurgence of Fascism” to “rebirth of liberal democracy with elements of both visions emerging in some places.” It demonstrates more the prevailing chaos now than any clarity emerging from the present. It is against this background that Indian strategic thinkers, particularly the VIF, will have to focus their energies in the coming years.

Random Thoughts illustratively ideates on where the emerging world order is likely to alter and even bound to look for alternatives and variations for contemporary domestic political, economic, strategic and geo-political thoughts, ideas, institutions, models and even associations. The suggestions for Indian thinkers, particularly nationalist think tanks like the VIF, to ideate for a contemporary and rising India’s role in global affairs, cannot be exhaustively listed or discussed. The basic intent of Random Thoughts is that Indian thinkers need to shift gears from being lethargic acceptors and willing consumers of ideas from outside as they have been for so long, to being active contributors of ideas for India and the world as well.

Random Thoughts is an effort to bring forth background and factors driving the Covid-19 impacted world and to illustratively discuss the areas where a global shift is bound to occur and where the VIF should focus on alternatives to contemporary global narratives and discourses.

## **Transition from Cold War to the present**

In the context of the Covid-19 challenge, the world has opened an unprecedented opportunity for an emerging India’s role in the future world order. Random Thoughts traces the origin of the post-Cold War global shift from ideology to unprincipled balance of power and how that was the foundation for the world’s turmoil today. It also recalls how when the socialist order collapsed, a euphoric West prematurely claimed its final victory against the Rest and treated the latter, mainly the socialist world, as a defeated lot and co-opted a non transparent China with Marx in Politics and Market in Economics into the transparent global market architecture, which led to unresolved and irresolvable transparency challenges for the West and the world. In contrast, during this period, we see how a Marxist China marketed itself, while an India with Marx in Economics and Democracy in Polity could not market itself as a democracy because the West was more keen on market than on democracy. It exposes how the West, after pretending to sleep, pretended to wake up in 2015 to realise that China was not a market economy at all 15 years after it was made a member of the transparent global market economy. It also sees Trumpism lasting beyond Trump because of the emerging bipartisan consensus against China, globalism and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

## **Factors and Players likely to influence the Post Covid-19 world order**

Seeing Covid-19 as only the context and not the cause for ongoing change of the world order, Random Thoughts discusses whether the Post-Covid-19 world order would evolve from globalisation to Cold Peace or

Cold War 2.0; on what kind of developments will shape the Post Covid-19 world order and India's role in shaping it, it lists illustratively --

- China's new expansionism and the US and global response
- The possible death of US-China engagement
- Likely Alliance of Democracies with India as a critical component
- Weakening of elite and "liberal" Western Democracies
- Liberal democracies shifting emphasis to the civilisation paradigm
- Liberal Democracy ceasing to be the measuring standard for democracies
- Vibrant India to redefine the new democratic paradigm
- Civilisational compatible democracy as the narrative of India
- Shift from unbridled human rights to the duties-based paradigm of Mahatma Gandhi
- Weakening a West-influenced UN and UN group of global institutions
- WTO already under stress becoming irrelevant
- Response of the Transatlantic Alliance to the China Challenge
- The China challenge and the need for a new technology paradigm
- India's emerging apex level eminence and its effects
- China's efforts to defocus India from growth and development
- Development: "One-Size Fit All" paradigm to cultural paradigm

By no mean exhaustive or exhaustible, the factors and players shaping the future world order is illustrated largely as an issue centered on the transparency of polity and market -- as democracies Vs autocracies -- and from the perspective of India whose brightest and the biggest asset and attraction in the emerging world will be its civilisational compatible democracy, which will never countenance or accept dictatorship. A non-transparent autocratic China, having taught a bitter lesson to the West and the World how dictatorship can overawe democracy in an open world, Indian democracy is the only hope for the free world. This is a most serious and profound aspect for investigation and investment of time and energy by strategic think tanks, including the VIF, seeking to study the emerging world.

## **Civilisational compatible Indian democracy as the narrative of India**

The issue of transparent democracies Vs non-transparent autocracies is likely to emerge as an important issue in geo-political, economic, trade and strategic alliances of the post-Covid-19 world order, which, according to Francis Fukuyama may see the “erosion of the liberal world order”. For preventing the erosion of the liberal world order and to strengthen divisive and weakening liberal democracies, the West will need to recall and align its civilisational assets with democracy. Unbridled individualist democracies rest on the strength of state architecture. Atomised ultra-individualists who live sans communities and societies, and even families, have become so self centered that they do not even care to vote (which is their only explicit and authentic expression of loyalty to the liberal state). Particularly the youth in the West are not taking interest in social, political and state affairs. The majority of minorities, less educated and less fortunate for whom the liberal order claims to plead, keep away from electoral processes. Individualist democracies in the West are weakening both ways. In contrast, the deliberative civilisational democracy that has been working on the ground over millennia in ancient India has always been vibrant. India is the only democracy where dictatorship imposed by a government was voted out. The way the ordinary and illiterate masses of India threw out the only attempt at imposing dictatorship in India in 1977 is a model of civilisational democracy at work for the world of democracy. This was when four years later the general literacy rate of India was 43.5 percent and female literacy was less than 22 percent. The general literacy rate in the four states with over 200 seats which wiped out the Emergency regime were Uttar Pradesh (33 percent) Bihar (32 percent), Madhya Pradesh (34 percent) and Rajasthan (30 percent). Female literacy rates were Uttar Pradesh (17 percent), Bihar (16 percent), Madhya Pradesh 19 percent and Rajasthan 14 percent. As compared to the previous election, 10 percent more people voted in 1977 to destroy the dictatorship -- as the national voting percentage rose from 55.5 percent in 1971 to 60.5 percent in 1977. It was not education, not high income or any upper criteria, but civilisational forces that brought about the defeat of the most feared and strongest of governments and, perhaps, the strongest leader of India in the 20th century. The civilisational narrative of Indian democracy needs global attention and exposition and the crisis in liberal democracy, which is already visible, and according to many, including Francis Fukuyama, will intensify and provide the most appropriate context for it. Random Thoughts extensively analyses the encounter between liberal democracies and civilisational Indian democracy in the context of the emerging global order and India’s role in it.

## **Covid-19 and post Covid issues and challenges of India**

On the Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 issues and challenges of India, Random Thoughts postulates that the time has arrived for an AtmaNirbhar Bharat – a self reliant India. It also speaks of the need to build a national consensus in India and the need for national introspection and debate to re-build institutional moral authority. Finally, in tune with the VIF motto of harmony in diversity, it hypothesises that the world needs a civilisational paradigm that recognises human and natural diversity, and builds a world order that recognises it as an alternative to the pure and homogenising materialist ideologies which seem to have played themselves out. It ends with an appeal to the VIF to play an active role in shaping it.

Before the ideation process begins, it is necessary to understand how Covid-19 is bound to make an unprecedented impact on the world. Random Thoughts sees it as an unparalleled disaster in the history of the world. It is also necessary to show how India under the present dispensation is a different India, which has achieved landmark developments and built a huge domestic economic infrastructure and political strength. This has changed and upgraded global perceptions about India, which provides the context for India to play a role in a world challenged and forced by the Covid-19 to rethink.

### **III. Covid-19 unparalleled compared to all bigger human disasters of the past disturbing the contemporary world order**

The monumental changes taking place now -- some of them seemingly without continuity and making a complete break with the past -- are unprecedented in human history, and were unthinkable even months earlier. It is true that many disasters in terms of human toll have been worse than Covid-19, most notably the Black Death, when hundreds of millions died, or even the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic when 50 million died, 20 million of which were in India. As compared to those disasters, Covid-19 is far less in terms of its human loss impact. But the impact of Covid-19 is incomparably more disastrous than any of them not only because of its sheer size, but also by the degree of interdependence and complexity of the human world as compared to a century before. The world is today incomparably more complex than even a quarter of a century ago. The human population in 1900 was 1.6 billion; today it is almost five times that, 7.8 billion. More than the far smaller size of the population then, the interdependability of the world in trade and economic terms was limited and the economies were organised more on national lines with limited global trade. For instance, according to Our World Data based in Oxford University, in constant terms, the index value of global trade was 75 in 1918 when the Spanish flu struck the world, and in 2008, it rose to 4915, by 65 times. Likewise, according to World Bank, the international migrant population rose from 71.9 million in 1990 to 243 million by 2015 -- equal to the total population of England, Germany France and Canada -- a rise of four times in 25 years, showing how globally interdependent and complex are human and economic relations in terms of migrants and their remittance incomes on which not just their families, but even their native countries depend. According to UNCTAD, International remittances were \$126 billion in 2000 and rose to \$689 billion in 2018 -- three times in 18 years; annual cross border investment rose from \$20 billion in 1990 to \$215 billion in 2015 -- almost 21 times in 25 years; Total cross border asset holdings increased from \$5.9 trillion in 1990 to \$103.5 trillion in 2017 -- 18 times in 25 years. This should give an idea about how human livelihood and national economies had become dependent on the distant and global and how disturbance in one place would torment all other places through chain impact. This high degree of global interconnectedness and interdependence of nations makes the Covid-19 disturbance a multi dimensional human disaster. Even more disastrous than the scale of destruction that Covid-19 is causing to the world, is the fallout of the phenomenon which is believed to be disturbing the current world order and changing it forever. This is likely to be far more costly to the world in the near and medium terms than the actual destructive impact of Covid-19 to humans, families, economies, societies and nations. The twin effect of the current destruction and the future devastation that it is likely to lead to makes the impact of Covid unparalleled in human history. And, that is what many think is threatening to overturn the contemporary world order.

Before we look at the depth and sweep of the far-reaching changes that are taking place at the global level, it is necessary to evaluate the development and the state of domestic politics for developing an Indian perspective to the global changes. This foreword about India is necessary to know from an Indian point of view how the country can and should respond to the global changes, what role it should play in shaping the changes and how far its domestic polity has the potential to support India's enhancing role at the global level.

#### **IV. Landmark developments in domestic politics and governance that have enhanced the stature of India for its due role in the world**

During the year under report, the National Democratic Alliance headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was re-elected to power with a greater majority in the 2019 parliamentary elections than in the previous 2014 election. It was a landmark event in the history of Indian politics, as it was after 30 years, that the lead party in power got re-elected with an absolute majority again. Also, it was after 50 years that a Prime Minister in office with an absolute majority of his own party, won the elections again with absolute majority. This ended multi-party and negative coalition politics to keep a major party out of power -- unstable and sometimes even bizarre -- that had undermined India's political will within and diluted the sovereign power of India outside for decades. It had also stymied India's voice in the global fora and impacted on its growth prospects as the continuity of policies suffered from uncertainties in the domestic polity. But the last two elections have proved to the world that given a clear programme and the right leader, the Indian electorate can choose a strong and stable government despite a diverse range of political parties competing for power in a country of greater diversity than the rest of the world put together. The last two elections have also explicitly called out the religious and other narrow vote bank elements that hid behind fake ideological politics that actually split the nation's polity, and brought about consolidation of national political power. Political stability is also reflected in the scale of performance of the government in diverse areas of development.

During the first tenure, the Modi government transformed the traditional incremental scale of thinking of the government into giant leaps in its thought and action. The opening of 380 million bank account by the poor, of which two thirds are women, with a total balance of Rs 1.36 trillion; making India substantially open defecation free in five years by subsidising and installing over 92 million toilets; delivering over 72 million free LPG connections for rural poor; building 15 million homes again for the poor; laying highway roads at more than double the pace at which the earlier governments used to do; transferring cash benefits of Rs 7.27 trillion to the poor through bank accounts since 2014-15, eliminating the middlemen who used to steal most of it earlier; delivering free health insurance for 157 million; accomplishing 100 percent rural electrification; connecting 1.2 lakh villages through optic fibre and finally and most importantly, introducing General Sales Tax (GST), which is perhaps the boldest of reforms to have been taken since the liberalisation programmes of the 1990s -- are some of the high points of scaled up governance. This scale of performance was unthinkable in the recent past, given the rickety alliance politics, bureaucratic lethargy, red tape and delays.

In less than a year after it won the decisive mandate in May 2019, the Modi 2.0 government has resolved four

of the most challenging issues facing the Indian polity. One, the amendment to the Indian Citizenship law, which conferred citizenship on persecuted minority refugees from Pakistan and Bangladesh awaiting justice for over half-a-century. Two, the unanimous judicial resolution of the Ayodhya Ram Temple construction issue, which first split and later redefined Indian polity. Three, the modification of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution -- one of the worst outcomes of the heavily compromised partition politics, which had weakened India within and outside – and the repeal of Article 35A. Four, the banning of Triple Talaq considered politically too risky a reform in Muslim law, even though it was mandated by the Supreme Court which had outlawed the most unacceptable form of Islamic divorce and its consequence of Nikkah Halala incompatible with contemporary times. It was against the law to grant citizenship rights for the persecuted minorities of Pakistan that large-scale violence were let loose by anarchic forces, seemingly as part of a conspiracy which is being investigated.

Within eight months of Modi 2.0 government assuming office after the 2019 general election came the Covid-19 crisis, which has cut the normal governance process and posed the biggest ever economic, social and political challenge to India as indeed to the rest of the world. The way the Indian government has handled the challenge so far, lent its support to global efforts to manage the crisis, taken the initiative to constitute a SAARC Fund and also pressed and got the G20 to meet on the issue, has won the universal appreciation of nations and international bodies. The unprecedented proactive role of the Indian government to which others responded positively has demonstrated India's rising stature in the world. It has also catapulted India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the most popular among global leaders.

In any view, the changes that are taking place in India's domestic politics in the last six years are unprecedented and unscaled in comparison to the past. These developments have also profoundly influenced the perception about India in the rest of the world.

## **V. Domestic Political Developments changing and upgrading Global Perception about India**

The last two Indian elections have also changed the perception of the world, particularly the democratic ones, which, because of shaky coalitions over decades, had unasked questions in mind like whether democratic India would at all ever have a strong government and leader. The Indian electorate has convinced a sceptic world about the potency and efficiency of Indian democracy by electing a strong and viable government and leader. Narendra Modi's global initiatives in the last six years have also raised India's stature and influence among the community of nations in a manner unprecedented in her strategic and diplomatic history. Also thanks to collateral global developments, India is now a significant global player because of its undoubted and non-conflicting soft power supported by its rising hard power. India, which was being equated to Pakistan till about a decade ago, has overcome that ignominy. That the Kashmir issue, which is almost regarded as an international issue and beyond the capacity of any government in India to resolve, has been reduced to domestic issue and resolved by the Indian parliament modifying Article 370 to make all provisions of the Indian Constitution and laws applicable to Jammu and Kashmir, is again no mean achievement. India has also been closing the wide

gap between itself and China in terms of global influence. The change in India's geo-political position in the last six years can be best judged by how from being among the "Fragile Five" in 2014, it transformed into the second fastest growing economy, or at times even the fastest and a respectable, hopeful and emerging global power. Three reasons have contributed to this change of perception. One, the remarkable political stability in India after 30 years of unstable politics. Two, the rise in its economic performance and efficient governance. And three, the rise in the relative stature of India and of its Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in the global arena.

## VI. Covid-19 challenge and Global rethink -- the context for India's role

The world economy has come to a standstill and global trade is expected to shrink by almost a third in the current year due to the Covid-19 havoc, the end of which is nowhere in sight. More importantly, the Covid-19 disaster has shocked the world into questioning its continued move on the superfast highway of globalisation on which it has been travelling at breakneck speed for two decades. The world which was seen as getting irretrievably integrated through technology, finances and supply chains of goods and services, and becoming a global village, is seemingly tending to question most of it. Since the turn of the 21st century, the world has been waking up from the dream of the end of ideological conflicts generated by the grand vision of the final victory of the West over the Rest. And even before the Covid-19 phenomenon struck the world, the US was in a withdrawal mood partly because of its own increasing fatigue over the global responsibilities it was bearing and partly because of the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. The changes in the US attitude towards globalisation post the emergence of Donald Trump, particularly in the face of the challenge posed by a rising China, has removed the facade of the pretended mutual trust of the 1990s, that had diluted the post-Cold War world order, which was based on the presumed victory of free global trade, investment and finance and their emergence as the future paradigm. And this also led to "One Size Fit All" economic and financial model paradigm. The inadequacies of the trade vehicle for managing a complex world got implicitly exposed when Islamist terror struck at the US in 2001. This exposure became more evident in the US post the 2008 financial crisis. Under the political changes heralded by Trumpism, the proponent of globalism, the US, began celebrating patriotism, not globalism -- read globalisation -- as the future paradigm. Covid-19 has infected Europe also with open distrust because of unanswered questions over the role or negligence of China in the virus spread which has strangled the global economy. The deepening distrust has not left even global institutions like WHO unaffected. The origins of today's distrust were inherent in the pretension of trust that rationalised the utterly unprincipled balance of power theorised by the US to end the Cold War. This is where the background of the post-Cold War world order that is functional today. It is necessary to diagnose what changes are likely and what will be the post Covid-19 world order. The inevitable melting of the post-Cold War order is the context for the much delayed role of India in global affairs.

And now onto the mainstay of the Random Thoughts exercise to capture the emerging scenario from ongoing global developments that threaten the contemporary world order, which relates back to and sequences from the Cold War and post-Cold War order, to the influencing factors and actors who are likely to shape the new world order, to India's role in the shaping of the new world order and its place in it.

## VII. Post Cold War Shift from Ideology to Unprincipled Balance of Power

The present world order originated in and moved from the unprincipled strategic approach that ended the Cold War. The existing world order was no natural and seamless transition from the Cold War order. It was shaped by contextual compulsions of geopolitics of Cold War power players -- the rich US on the one side and poverty stricken China on the other. It was power that mattered. Power that mattered was no benign power but a destructive power. If only China had not had an atom bomb in its hands, no one would have touched it, much less the US. The Cold War, which was the outcome of World War II, was an ideological conflict between Western liberal democracy and free market economy on one side and single party Communist dictatorship and socialist economy on the other. The Cold War games were played out mainly in Asia, and finally in Vietnam, which exposed the limitations of the remote US-led alliance.

In the late 1960s, the US, the head of the free market and democratic bloc in the Cold War, was desperately in need of respite from the Vietnam War. In the early 1970s, the US sensed that, devastated by the Cultural Revolution that was still on, China too, with no love lost for the USSR which was no great help, was equally desperate for a survival kit to save itself from a socialist economic disaster. It was then that Henry Kissinger's theory of realpolitik as an alternative to ideological politics struck a chord with Richard Nixon, the then US President. Kissinger's key propositions were: (i) International system is anarchic, with no controlling entity; (ii) States are the principal actors in the international system; (iii) States pursue their national interest – power and/or security; (iv) Relations between states are determined by relative power, both military and economic; (v) Peace would come from a balance of power among states, an equilibrium within a generally accepted “legitimate” World order; (vi) Realism ought to be the core policy for America between the extremes of isolationism and Wilsonianism; (vii) Importantly, issues of human rights, democracy, freedom are secondary.

Simply stated, Kissinger counselled that no moral or ideological principle other than balance of power and convenience can define the global order. Kissinger's formulations convinced the US to accept ideological differences as they were and deal with the world as was where it was basis, on the logic of relative power even though it might run contrary to the core principles of the West. One of the proximate causes that forced China to look to the US were the skirmishes with the USSR in the Ussuri region in 1969. It rested on the US acceptance of China as a strategically in return for China to work with the US to end the Vietnam War and to split and break the Communist bloc to restore the balance of political and economic power, which was clearly shifting away from the US in the early 1970s, in its favour. The huge drop in US gold reserves from over 700 million troy ounces to less than 300 million troy ounces by 1970, the high inflation and money expansion, had weakened the US dollar and the US economy. This, besides the no way out war in Vietnam, was one of the compelling reasons for the huge compromise that the US opted to make with China -- the primary objective of which was to divide the enemy and to secure exit from Vietnam. Though it finally did end in a humiliating exit for the US in Vietnam, it was an exit still. The only thing that the monumental move by the US did was to split and create rivalry in the socialist bloc and weaken the post-World War II world order founded on the Cold War divide.

Its own desperation to end the Vietnam War forced the US first to accept China as it was, which it thought might enable China, through trade and economic relations with the US, to reform away from socialist economics but not give up its one party dictatorship. This is where the US theorised the possibility of market economics coalescing with the Marxist state -- namely cat and mouse living in harmony in the same house! This strange logic nevertheless rationalised the democratic and free market West to align with Marxist China to shift the balance of power from the Soviet bloc to the West, or at least to neutralise the Socialist bloc. Later, as a final assault to demolish the divided Communist bloc, the US created and used Islamic extremism to inflict a humiliating setback to the USSR in the Afghan War [1979-89]. It also enacted the Star War theatre [1983-93] to break the nerve, confidence and economy of the Soviet Union. These developments forced the eventual collapse of the USSR as they were indeed calculated to. In less than two decades from the US-China detente, aided by the theoretical inadequacy and the practical inefficiency of Communist system, making it incapable of competing with the efficient free market mechanism, the Cold War collapsed. And the West, with its institutions of liberal democracy and free market, persuaded itself to believe that it had won not just against the Socialist bloc, but also against the entire Rest of the World to the extent, that a great thinker like Francis Fukuyama, imagined that the Hegelian idea of a perfect state had indeed been realised by the West.

## VIII. Euphoric, premature and unwise claim of final victory of the West against the Rest

Had the West stopped at seeing this as only the defeat of the Socialist bloc that would have been practical and probably correct? But that is where it got excited by theories like the end of all conflicts and final victory of the Western values over that of the Rest. In the euphoria of the collapse of socialist economics, the West embarked on the over ambitious project of globalisation and the WTO, which rested on the assumption and conviction of superiority of the West over the Rest, and this was where it erred. Western market economics certainly won against socialist economics, but it was not the victory of the West over the Rest, because the world was not and would never be completed only by and between the two materialist ideologies of Marx and Market. The world was and even now, far too diverse to be packed within the campus of two materialist ideologies, one of which had succeeded against the other and the other which had failed against the first. But on the self-generated belief that there was no competition for it from anywhere, the West went ahead to include the Marxian polity in the market-centric globalisation and WTO structure. In its excitement, the West was oblivious to the fundamental fact that while both market and democracy individually and together complement, are transparent and verifiable, Marx is not, and a market aligned with Marx too is not, and cannot be.

The process of accepting the Marxist state of China into the market mechanism of WTO in 2001 was preceded by the West accepting even a more complicated mix of democratic polity within Marxist China. To facilitate the merger of Hong Kong and for giving comfort to Taiwan for its eventual unification with China, a more sophisticated theory of One Country Two Systems was evolved in the early 1980s and implemented in 1997 and sold to the West. Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese reformer dictator, committed, *“We are pursuing a policy of “one country, two systems” . . . [T]his means that within the People’s Republic of China, the mainland with its one billion people will*

*maintain the socialist system, while Hong Kong and Taiwan continue under the capitalist system”.* Trusting this oxymoron logic, the US traded off its ally of two decades Taiwan and orphaned it, for a strategic partnership with China. But fortunately even though the US government sold out Taiwan between 1971 and 1978, the US Congress negated that with the Taiwan Relations Act, also of 1979, before the one-country-two-systems was finally promulgated in 1982. The West overlooked the fact that the socialist market idea was oxymoron and the mix of Marx in politics and market in economics was equally so.

## **IX. China: Marx in Politics and Market in Economics -- transparency challenges to the world and West**

If there is any convergence between free market economist Milton Friedman in his *Capitalism and Freedom* [1962] and Left economist Amartya Sen in his *Development as Freedom* [1999], which won for him the Nobel Prize, it was on the relation between democracy and market economy and how one is a necessary condition, or at least the facilitator, for the other. The US flouted this basic rule of market economics in two stages. First, to break the Communist bloc and to gain the balance of power it was losing to the USSR-led socialist alliance, by coalescing China and giving annual extensions of Normal Trade Relations since the early 1970s and Most Favourable Nation treatment to it from 2001 once it joined the WTO, thus partially recognising the Marx-Market mix. It continued this even after the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, when, in its own national interest, the US condoned China killing thousands. Thereafter, in its post Cold War euphoria of the victory of the West over the Rest, the US facilitated the integration of China into the WTO. The induction of China into the WTO eminently suited the geopolitical and strategic interests of the US/West. The US progressively intensified strategic engagement with China, which even included arms sales to China in 1983. It equally admirably suited the aspiration of western corporate lobbies to penetrate a market which was as large then as the population of US and European Union (EU) put together. This aspiration found reflection in the US/EU rationale for the admission of China into the WTO, which was self-evident in discussions with the WTO. The fundamental drive for both is the over confidence of the West about the universality and infallibility of its own values, which casually and presumptuously persuaded it to accept and integrate within the structure of free market globalisation the Chinese model of Market with Marx -- that is Market without Democracy or freedom -- a cocktail that separates economic freedom from the larger idea of freedom, economic democracy from political democracy. The cocktail of non-transparent Marxian Polity at home and the transparent global market allowed China access to global capital and technology almost as one way traffic in an ecosystem where China knew everything that happens in all developed nations without them knowing what happens in China. China denied the West transparency of information which is the very breath of market economics. It suited global MNCs to shift their operations to China to escape the transparent rules of their domestic polity. Despite knowing that transparency is at the heart of market economics, the West admitted a non-transparent China into the WTO. This is where the presumptive West badly miscalculated. They never anticipated that a non-transparent autocratic China, unlike a transparent democracy, had all the advantages of ensuring that it did not become the market for the West as the latter had thought, but instead become a cheap producer and turn the West into its own market, depriving the West of its production infrastructure. But long after admitting China, the West realised that a Marxist polity would not

reveal or admit any information or data transparency into the transparent global trading system other than what it allowed. China went from strength to strength and the West began pleading with it for transparency, a demand China kept on evading.

In a paper titled “China’s Transparency Challenges” published by Foreign Policy [8.3.2016], Ben Bernanke, the former Governor of the US Federal Reserve, wrote about how the world was struggling to make China transparent. The Bernanke Paper starts with saying empathetically that it is “a difficult transition for a government accustomed to secrecy” and proceeds to discuss just two important forms of transparency namely (i) Data transparency (producing believable numbers) and (ii) Transparency about the rules of the game (being clear about the rules and policies that affect participants in commerce, the markets etc). On data transparency the paper suggested that “to increase the credibility of Chinese economic data, increase the credibility of the data collectors”. Who are the data collectors? The government! How to increase the credibility of the Marxian Polity which collects the data? On the second, namely the transparency in the rules of the game, the Bernanke Paper says “the absence of clear and transparent rules and policies—in financial markets, as well as for activities such as commerce, capital investment, and trade, is a major problem because it dissuades participation, adds uncertainty and can even foster corruption.” The paper concluded:

*“There is great value in good communication about policy. Indeed, in the words of a recent Wall Street Journal Article, investors are putting “more clarity from China’s central bank over its currency policy and better communication from its stock-market regulator” at the “top of their wish list.” But transparency is more than press conferences. Data transparency provides investors, the public, and even Chinese policymakers greater confidence about the state of the economy, and transparency about the rules of the game is critical for the economy and for financial markets. The more transparency and consistency the Chinese government can provide in these spheres, the better will be China’s economic performance and the greater its ability to integrate with the global marketplace.”*

This is as late as in 2016. More than four decades after US-China detente started, more than three decades after the US began developing deep investment and trade relations with China and over 15 years after China was admitted to the transparent WTO, the world was still pleading for an assurance of transparency from China. With its non-transparent Marxist polity, and operating in a transparent global market (WTO) and in national markets of other countries, China gained immensely. The cocktail of Marx and Market has been a big factor in the rise of China as the global factory first and in developing product technology next. But this suited the US and the West so long as the US could confidently lead the world with its financial supremacy and elite technology.

## **X. India: Marx in Economics and Democracy in Politics**

The stark contrast was between China and India and how they respectively were treated by the US and West. In China, it was Marx in Politics and Democracy in Economics. It was the other way round in India, Marx in Economics and Democracy in Politics -- till the early 1990s when China was almost 15 years into development mode. The increasing strategic involvement of the West with China since the 1980s when India was hooked to the USSR, the main adversary of the US, gave China a head start over India. The undisclosed factor that attracted

the West -- which actually meant the MNC lobbies -- to China was, as an authoritative study put it, “the image of political stability (single party dictatorship in China)”, “as foreign capital is a shy deer which needs trust and stability to be tamed”. This is where -- apart from the geopolitical strategic alliance of China with the later winner West, and India with the later loser USSR -- even as its autocracy worked in China’s favour, its democracy and freedom worked against India. This is particularly because, with its single party dominance ending in domestic politics, India entered a prolonged period of 25 years of coalition from 1989, of which almost 20 years were of unprincipled and even rickety coalitions, inevitably resulting in instability till 2014. From 1989, at the most crucial time in China’s and Indian economies, democracy became synonymous with unstable coalitions and instability. In contrast, during this entire period, and even from a decade earlier, an autocratic Marxian polity worked heavily in favour of China.

Here is a telling example of how Marxian polity worked in favour of China for MNCs’ to rush there. In July 1994, the Chinese Congress passed a “labour law” which reaffirmed control of individual enterprises over the hiring and firing of workers, their wage scales, their social welfare benefits, and replacement of lifetime employment with a limited contract system. “A one-party state and restrictions on freedom of association gave Chinese workers no opportunity to play a part in formulating a new law”, said Human Rights Watch China [August 2002]. Such a law could never have been passed in the constitutionally declared socialist state of India, even after the much trumpeted liberalisation of the 1990s, and cannot be passed even today! The West, with its compelling business lobbies also keen on avoiding market discipline, moved away from its commitment to political freedom and dissent, and preferred the Chinese model of Market in Economics with Marx in Politics. In the process, India’s model of Marx in Economics and Democracy in Politics became a double whammy point against India because of the answerability to dissent in democracy. China had the best of both worlds -- all the advantages of a non-transparent Marxian Polity with no disadvantage of democratic dissent at home and at the same time access to a rule based and transparent global market in which it could participate to take abundantly, giving little in return.

## **XI. West realises too late in 2015 that China is a Non-Market Economy**

Shockingly, 15 years after China joined the WTO, i.e. in 2015, the EU woke up to realise that the WTO, was not a market economy at all. Five years back, the EU had raised a dispute because China is a Non Market Economy [NME] where economic decisions are taken by state rather than by the markets and had levied anti-dumping duties on Chinese products. China rightly threw the West on the defence and contended that its admission in the WTO amounted to accepting its market economic status and challenged the EU action. China had also challenged a similar action by the US which has not moved to the hearing stage. Last year, in an interim ruling, the WTO had upheld the EU view. This was a case which many saw as making or breaking the WTO. The WTO was virtually threatened by the West that if the ruling went against it, that would be the end of the WTO. China could have asked for a final ruling, but recognising that its case rested on West’s assumptions rather than facts, told the WTO to suspend the proceedings. China lost its case for recognition as a market economy so badly that it did not want a final finding on the issue. China has quietly shelved the issue. This shows how short sighted the euphoric West had been in inviting China into the WTO.

## XII. Emergence of Trumpism in US -- antithesis of globalisation -- likely to last beyond Trump

It was more on the euphoria and overconfidence of the West which deluded itself to believe it as the final win against the Rest -- and not so much as on the strategic mutual trust between world nations which joined the WTO -- that globalisation rested. If there was any show of trust, it was more pretended for strategic convenience than factual and truthful trust. A non-transparent China had got the better of a confident West, particularly the US, in exploiting the transparent global order and ran huge current account surpluses for decades and built huge forex reserves and made investments all over the US, EU and across the world. The West enjoyed the efficient market delivery of China's Marxian polity till the financial meltdown in 2008 shocked the US into realising that its efficient and strong financial architecture and technological superiority were not adequate to keep its economic and consequently economic, supremacy if it continued to lose real economic advantage and manufacturing capability, and ran current account deficits with China that sequenced the latter into becoming a huge investor in US treasury securities and in US companies. This realisation led to the advent of the Trump phenomenon and Trumpism in US politics, which now looks certain to last beyond Trump by bipartisan consensus on China, whether Donald Trump wins a second term or not. The US has realised that the mismatch and contradiction between Marx and Market had helped China's rise not as just a competitor, but as a challenger to US techno-economic might and even to US influence in the world. The US, which had earlier become a fan of China as also many European nations, began to reverse its unusual softness towards China and began a trade war which was unthinkable till the advent of Donald Trump.

The emergence of Trumpism though contextually associated with the election of Trump, had its roots in issues which emerged from the global financial meltdown of 2008. Hidden behind this huge setback is the questioning of all macroeconomic theories of the last three decades on which the Western financial model had rested. On the assumption of the infallibility of mathematical formulae founded on financial modelling, the West had ceded real economy [a job-oriented production economy] to others relying on its control over the global financial architecture which, it thought, would enable it to control the real economy. This overlooked the critical fact that if a non-transparent Marxian polity took over the real economy, as the financial economy is not really independent of the real [production] economy, it was only a matter of time that the winner in the real economy gained control of the financial economy. The West has realised that the shift in real economic power to a non-transparent China has also enabled it to acquire substantial real financial power, leaving the US/West with largely phony financial power. This realisation is at the heart of Trumpism, which questions the foundations of globalism and goes back to patriotism, which is actually a euphemism for nationalism. Trumpism in the US is sure to last beyond Trump as it has transcended bipartisan divisions, as two Democratic Party Senators supported a Bill to withdraw the US from WTO, which is the very symbol and outcome of globalisation. This realisation inevitably means that the great idea of global supply chains sourcing from the cheapest nation on which globalisation functions today is not the future game. The future paradigm seems to be national self reliance in regard to whatever is necessary in the national interest and in the national security interest -- which is the very antithesis of the contemporary idea of globalisation.

### **XIII. Covid-19 only a context, not a cause for change of world order**

Given the shift that was taking place in the balance of techno-economic power from the West to East i.e. to Asia, particularly China, and the rise of Trumpism in America which had set off economic and political forces which will ensure that Trumpism will last beyond Trump, changes that were already taking place were indicating a clear U-turn from rule-based multilateralism which is the foundation of globalisation. The unilateral trade and tariff action of the US against China, Europe and even India were in line with assertive economic nationalism in the US and expressive trend against globalism. The pre-Covid developments in trade and economics had actually set off the changes, which in a way indicated the alteration in the world order that was emerging. The advent of Covid-19 provided the most justifiable context and expedited the move for a change of the world order that was already taking place unnoticed and undeclared.

### **XIV. Post-Covid-19 World Order -- Globalisation to Cold Peace or Cold War 2.0?**

Even as the pre-Covid world was already showing cracks in the post-Cold War global order, the Covid-19 disaster exposed the fragility of the latter. The Covid phenomenon has not only bared the hollowness of post Cold War order based on the euphoric idea of the end of history and conflicts, it has also stripped open the also strategic and pretended trust and has showed that it was actually driven by the political expediency of Western nations and business interests of Western MNCs. It needs no seer to say that the very basis of the post Cold War order has ceased to exist. The pretence of trust which forced the US/West to accept, to cite just one big outcome of it, namely the delegitimisation of Taiwan for instance, now cannot work, as US warships have begun hovering around Taiwan Strait stirring tensions to the extent of China talking of war. The very strategic substance of the current world order has collapsed.

That is why the main architect of the post-Cold War world order, Henry Kissinger, himself in a short article of 828 words in Wall Street Journal, said “The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order”. Even though he uses powerful words like forever to qualify the change in the world order, he does not even remotely hint what kind of changes it will be. This is where past history is important to show what the picture in future will be. Past history remembered and recalled is the best teacher when the present is chaotic and the future looks confusing. That is why a bit of recall of post- Cold War history was necessary to have a clue about the changes that are likely in the present context. Undeniably, the very foundation of the new world order of the 1990s, based on the shaky foundation of pretended mutual trust and conflict free world seemed to have abruptly become questionable in the Covid-19 devastated world. Consequently, the Covid-19 crisis is making the world and many important nations of the world introspect and rethink their immediate and distant future and also on the way forward during and after the Covid-19 crisis. But the extent and depth of the change that will result from the rethinking, will also depend on the length and the expanse of the damage that the ongoing and unending Covid-19 phenomenon is likely to cause. Whether the impact and effect of this sudden shift from an integrated world of strategic and pretended mutual trust to a divided and distorted world of open mutual distrust, and how deep will be the division, whether it will be a replay of Cold War 2.0 or Cold Peace as someone said, which will precede Cold War 2.0, only the post-Covid-19 events will show as they unfold. If the Covid-19 changes lead

to Cold War 2.0, the remedy will take long. How deep and how far this introspection will go and whether this will bring about fundamental changes, is unclear at the moment. Whatever the outcome, far reaching long term changes seem inevitable. The world after Covid-19 will be different, very different, from the world before -- in terms of global, political, economic and strategic relations.

## **XV. Developments that will shape the Post Covid-19 World Order**

Attempted guess work by minds that are trusted to give clarity on what will be the shape of the new world order post-Covid-19 is one of confusion worse confounded. Prognosticating on the shape of the post-Covid-19 world order, this is what Francis Fukuyama has to say in his article in the latest Foreign Affairs magazine [July-August 2020]

*Over the years to come, the pandemic could lead to the United States' relative decline, the continued erosion of the liberal international order, and a resurgence of fascism around the globe. It could also lead to a rebirth of liberal democracy, a system that has confounded sceptics many times, showing remarkable powers of resilience and renewal. Elements of both visions will emerge, in different places. Unfortunately, unless current trends change dramatically, the general forecast is gloomy.*

The bandwidth of the prognosis -- from erosion of the liberal world order and resurgence of Facism to rebirth of liberal democracy with elements of both visions emerging in some places -- demonstrates more the prevailing confusion than any possibility of clarity emerging from the present.

One thing seems to be fairly clear. The post-Covid-19 world order is likely to be characterised in varying degrees by direct and indirect reversals of the basic postulates of the post-Cold War world order, which seems to have outlived their utility after the assumption of the final victory of the West over the Rest proved to be spurious. The past seems to be guidance only to show how decisions in euphoria will mislead. It is in times of euphoria and despondency that even an individual, or a corporate, needs and more so the world needs both cool and calm contemplation. Whether the leading nations of the world are capable of that, or like the euphoria did in 1990s, the despondency of the present will again mislead the world in a wrong and unsustainable direction, remains to be seen. No sustainable decision can be taken in euphoria or despondency. But world nations are more reactive to crisis than they are proactive to avoid them. With only confusion all around, what are the circumstances and what are the factors that are or likely to influence and shape the future world order post-Covid-19 and who are likely to be the actors and players in shaping the future world and its order or even disorder needs to be surveyed. e. Here follows an illustrative list of some of them, and on how they can impact on the emerging global discourse and global order.

## **XVI. US and global response to China's new expansionism**

One of the important factors that will shape the post-Covid-19 world order is China's rising global ambitions, which are rooted in its traditional empire building instincts and in the efforts of the US/West and

other democracies to respond to it and contain it. When an inward looking and semi-isolated China began its detente and engagement with the US in 1971, its initial declared position was against not just itself becoming a superpower, but against the very concept of super power itself. This was how Deng Xiaoping, who had accused the US and USSR as superpowers which exploited the world in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly [July 10, 1974], concluded it:

*China is a socialist country and a developing country as well. China belongs to the Third World. Consistently following Chairman Mao's teachings, the Chinese Government and people firmly support all oppressed peoples and oppressed nations in their struggle to win or defend national independence, develop the national economy and oppose colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism. This is our bounden internationalist duty. China is not a superpower, nor will she ever seek to be one. What is a superpower? A superpower is an imperialist country which everywhere subjects other countries to its aggression, interference, control, subversion or plunder and strives for world hegemony. If capitalism is restored in a big socialist country, it will inevitably become a superpower. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which has been carried out in China in recent years, and the campaign of criticizing Lin Biao and Confucius now under way throughout China, are both aimed at preventing capitalist restoration and ensuring that socialist China will never change her colour and will always stand by the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations. **If one day China should change her colour and turn into a superpower, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.***

The concluding sentences in bold letters of Deng Xiaoping, which expounded China as a nation that disfavoured the very idea of superpower, formed the basis of US-China engagement. Deng Xiaoping had made two points in his celebrated address at the UN. One, China would continue to be socialist. Two, China would never seek to become a superpower. On the first, he changed in 1992, as he approved the building of a Socialist Market for China, which was a key theme of Jiang Zemin's political report to the 14th Chinese Congress. On the second, namely becoming a super-power, which, he said, China disfavoured, he had himself initiated steps for the inclusion of Hong Kong and Taiwan within the Chinese state by proposing and successfully selling to the US and West in 1997 the "One Country Two Systems" idea. By this one-nation-two-systems oxymoron, he indeed achieved the integration of Hong Kong and so delegitimised the geopolitical position of Taiwan, which became the principal sacrificial goat in the US-China engagement to the point that Taiwan lost all its leverage in global affairs.

At that point of time the West and the Rest believed Deng Xiaoping as China was an underdog. But when everyone was arrested by the context in which China stood, one person saw far into the future in the backfound civilisational urges buried deep in its psyche. A least noticed Indian thinker M.S Golwalkar, the chief of the Rashtriya Swayasevak Sangh, regarded as the largest cultural and social youth movement and NGO in the world and the inspiration behind the present ruling party the Bharatiya Janata Party was almost prophetic about today's China when he said as far back as in 1972 that "*China has not broken up with their past. Wait for some more time. All their traditional ways will become patent once again. Their present desire to spread their*

*tentacles of power and influence are in keeping with the tradition of their old emperors. A little of Confucius and a lot of their old emperors form the mainstream of their life. Communism is only a temporary phase.”* He said this when the context in which China had been placed was in total repudiation of what he had said. This was when the cultural revolution in China was in full swing and Chinese had been totally evangelised against Confucius and Lin Piao had been humiliated couple of years before Deng Xiaoping thundered before the UN that China was against the very concept of superpower and decades before China began unveiling its hidden empire building instincts, with a little of Confucius as Golwalkar had foreseen. Every word that Golwalkar uttered then has proved to be true now. No one could have said at that point that communism would be only a temporary phase and China which had been turned by massive cultural revolution against Confucius completely would return back to him. Both have happened in contemporary China. It needed a philosopher like Golwalkar, not arrested by the context, to study deep and unravel the Confucian philosophy and empire building urges buried deep in a civilisation pretending to be a communist state in China. Geopolitical strategists like Kissinger who presumed communism, which sees history as product and irreversible progress of dialectical materialism that breaks from the people’s previous ways of understanding, as the terminator of their civilisational past, could not see the Confucian philosophy and civilisationally conscious China lying underneath. It was Francis Fukuyama in his book *Trust* [1995] who first talked about Confucian China surviving a communist China, but no one ever foresaw an empire building China emerging from an underdog China till very late, as late as 2013.

Post Deng Xiaoping, China has explicitly begun unveiling its agenda not just to be counted as a superpower, but also exhibit its global hegemonic ambitions, all thanks to the promotional role played by its Cold War benefactor -- the US. In a seminal article titled and subtitled “China: Empire Building in the Age of Globalization How has China systematically taken advantage of U.S. mistakes and policies?” in the *Gobalist.com*, Behzad Yaghmaian, an Iranian-born author living in the United States and a professor of political economy who has taught in the United States, Iran, and Turkey, wrote as far back as April 2013:

*China is replacing its main economic rivals around the world largely without the use of force. China’s success marks the first case of empire building in the age of globalization. The United States helped China’s economic ascendance by promoting globalization and embracing, in recent years, a free market orthodoxy. In the annals of history, it will be noted that it was the United States itself that championed a new economic structure which ultimately undermined its own position in the world. How did this happen? China’s decision to open its economy to the world coincided with the U.S. drive for globalization. U.S. and Western corporations opened the economic floodgates to China through direct investment and subcontracting agreements. As Western capitalism globalized, China became the factory of the world. Meanwhile, its free market ideology and obsession with balancing the budget became policy straightjackets that hobbled the United States’ ability to spend strategically on its future. As a result, money that could have been spent on education, research and development, modern infrastructure and other requisites for out-competing its rivals was in short supply. Unencumbered by a free market orthodoxy, the Chinese opted for the opposite choice. They poured resources into areas pivotal for building a robust and competitive economy. China became the unintended winner of the limits of the United States’ free market ideology.*

This prognosis was made when no one was thinking that China would ever challenge the US. Behzad Yaghmaian was no theorist. In 2007, he travelled to China to live among the growing population of internal migrants working in the country's sprawling factories and authored the book "The Accidental Capitalist: A People's Story of the New China" (Pluto Press, 2012) which is a narrative of China's economic and social transformation told through the personal biographies of migrants. China's empire building, which he had foreseen in 2013, became more and more explicit when it proposed transnational ventures like the \$900 billion Silk Road project [*China's Xi lays out \$900bn Silk Road vision amid claims of empire-building Guardian UK 14.5.2017*]. China's simultaneous actions like its South China Sea forays, Hong Kong annexation, threats to Taiwan and Asian nations and its open clashes with India are clearly illustrative of not just its assertive global ambitions, but even global hegemony, which is completely contrary to the China that Deng Xiaoping presented before the world in 1974. China's global ambitions and the global response to that will be one of the factors that will shape the post Covid-19 world order.

## **XVII. Possible Death of US-China engagement**

The unprecedented rise of China, particularly post the 2008 financial meltdown in the US and West, sent alarm bells ringing in the US. But it took the rise of Trumpism in the US to raise questions as to who benefitted from the US-China engagement. The result is that the US-China engagement that commenced in 1971 through the Kissinger Formula, which replaced the world of ideologies by global balance of power and mainstreamed China, and caused its rise, is now at great risk of deterioration, if not termination. There are such gloomy forebodings that the engagement is facing death or is even dead. The WireChina, a digital news magazine dedicated to understanding and explaining China's economic rise, and its influence on global business, finance, trade, labour and the environment as one of the biggest stories of the contemporary world, has virtually written an obituary for the US-China engagement in its long essay titled "Death of an Engagement" [7.6.2020] The Wire China says 'the policy of "engagement" which has defined US-China relations for almost half-a-century, didn't have to end this way. The death of US-China engagement will have far reaching consequences not only to the US and China, but also to the whole world of trade, business and politics.

## **XVIII. Likely Alliance of Democracies with India as a critical component**

The most likely and the most crucial development in the post Covid crisis is the alliance of democracies of all hues without distinction between 'the upper caste' elite western democracies and the different hierarchies of 'lower caste' eastern democracies as less liberal, illiberal on the norms of the West, as the West has been classifying and branding the democracies. Data shows that all hues of democracies constitute less than half of the world's population, while autocracies constitute more than half. This interesting development has a lot to offer to India and India has to work for shifting the world to democratic paradigm as global institutions, like the Brookings, have of late begun seeing India as "the silver or even the golden lining" the world of democracies with many liberal democracies in distress or decline.

With the rise of autocratic China, the new world order may centre around democracies. In the post-Covid world, the balance of power idea may create new divisions between electoral democratic nations and non-electoral autocracies. The likely expansion of G7 into G10/11 that does not include China, but includes Russia, India, South Korea and Australia, is a pointer in this direction. With the undeniable failure of working trust between western democracies and the Chinese combination of Market Economics and Marxian Polity, the future paradigm may be an alliance of democracies of the world as a more desirable and stable foundation for a new global order. Accordingly, plurilateral trade and investment pacts, and strategic relations between democracies, may emerge. In the past, the West was seeing stability of regimes as more important than democracy for forging strategic and business relations. Studies in the past have shown that nations with single party dictatorships have attracted more foreign direct investment (FDI) than democracies and that FDI has ensured the survival of dictatorship. This was obviously because of seeking higher profits without regard to what risks a nation without transparency can cause to the world at large. In future, political and cultural comfort more than mere profits in commerce may determine the alliances. With the bitter experience of Western nations with the single party dictatorship of China, the future world is, therefore, more likely to see alliances of democracies of varying hues and types, with India playing a most consequential role.

A recent pre-Covid paper [February 2019] titled “Democracy and Disorder” by Foreign Policy, which had analysed the impact and the role of democracies in preserving the contemporary world order in the context of the efforts of China and Russia to undermine the Western democracies, thinks that with the West weakening during the post-2008 financial crisis, is a fairly good assessment of the pre-Covid-19 world order, which was founded on the dominance of democracies. It sees India as the silver lining in the world of disturbed democracies. It asks the most pertinent question, *“If both advanced and emerging democracies are reeling from a combination of political, economic, and cultural challenges, what are the implications for the international order?”*. Responding to the question, it emphasises the role of emerging democracies, and says: *“This moment in history calls for rising democratic powers to play a greater role in preserving the international order”* and, while saying so, it specifically points to India as the silver, even golden lining, and says: *“The silver—perhaps golden— lining here is that the least distracted of these countries is also by far the most consequential: India.”* The background analysis for this observation in the pre-Covid-19 state of the world, being more important, given the transformation that is taking place in the post-Covid-19 world order, is extracted here:

*If both advanced and emerging democracies are reeling from a combination of political, economic and cultural challenges, what are the implications for the international order?*

*If the present moment of democratic stagnation came at a point of relative stability in the international order, its implications would be less substantial. In fact, internal setbacks are occurring when the stakes could not be higher: China has begun to turn its economic weight into political influence, and to compete with the West at a global political level; Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to take substantial risks and use the country’s military and technological capabilities toward destabilizing Western democracies and the Western alliance; and the Middle East is in turmoil (partially of the West’s making), with significant spillover effects for other regions.*

*In the decade since the global financial crisis, the international order has transitioned from a time when democracies had significant leverage, moved through a fleeting phase of global cooperation, and has landed in a reality characterized by an escalating contest between the powers, in which authoritarian states are making a concerted effort to weaken the role of democracy in international affairs.*

*The energy, focus and unity of the West would be sorely tested by these challenges in even the best of times. Instead, right off the starting blocks, the West and the democratic world more broadly is de-energized, distracted, and in disarray. And in the face of an alliance-skeptical, unilateralist policy under President Trump, it is even more disunited.*

***What of the emerging democracies? This moment in history calls for rising democratic powers to play a greater role in preserving the international order. Were the West both stable and unified, and its leverage still high, one might have anticipated a gradual but growing contribution to the multilateral order by the democratic rising powers. Instead, early misfires during the Obama administration, uncertainty in American policy during the Trump administration, the high costs of getting caught in the crosshairs of U.S.-China tensions, and their own internal setbacks are combining to place sharp limits on these states' capacity and willingness to contribute to the defense of democracy either within their regions or globally. The silver—perhaps golden— lining here is that the least distracted of these countries is also by far the most consequential: India.***

*Indeed, it is notable that democracies in the Indo-Pacific and Asia are less troubled by the populist tide than their Western counterparts. Countries like India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan were less damaged economically by the global financial crisis, or recovered faster, and have limited exposure to the recent turmoil in the Middle East. At the same time, they are motivated to maintain the regional order because they are most directly challenged by China's assertive turn. Perhaps they have most to lose from uncertainty in American foreign policy, but Asia has also been the place where President Trump's initial anti-alliance rhetoric and instincts gave most ground to more conventional approaches to strategy (except on trade.)*

What the Foreign Policy paper calls as the challenges of democracy in advanced nations is in a sense an understatement of the risks the Western democracies run. The elite and liberal democracies are weakening gradually, and shockingly, the very philosophy of liberalism delivered by liberal democracy is eroding liberal democracies themselves. This emerging risk for the democracies of advanced nations calls for a closer look at liberal democracies and the movement from individualistic liberalism to towards collective civilisational consciousness in Eastern and Central Europe. There is a need for comparison of the depth of Indian democracy and the risks that liberal democracies run. From the global perspective, India must assess and evaluate its deeper and entrenched democratic spirit and not bench mark its deeper democratic consciousness on the standards of the risky liberal democracies of the West which seem to be running out of steam. A comparison of the weakening state of democracies in the West with a vibrant Indian democracy will point to the need to revisit the individualist concept of unbridled human rights and liberal democratic order with the Indian narrative of civilisation defined individualist democracy as a contrast to the liberalism defined individualist democracy. This profound discussion will mark the post-Covid-19 democratic world order.

## **XIX. Weakening elite and “liberal” Western Democracies**

It is interesting to compare the depth of democracies in the West, including the US, which self certify their democracies as liberal and democracies like India's as illiberal. How ridiculous the classification is may be easily established by looking at irrefutable facts which show the decline of civil society interest in political process in the liberal democracies and further show their elite and top of the pyramid structure, while, in contrast, Indian democracy labelled as illiberal, is grounded and participatory, deep from bottom of the pyramid.

### **Voter interest falling in liberal democracies**

A study titled “Voter Turnout Around the World ” by the International [IDEA] Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, shows that world over there is a decline in voting percentage in all democracies. The global average has declined from about 76 in the 1950s to about 65 percent in 2010. The International IDEA data shows that the decline is across all types of democracies. In Free Democracies, from over 75 percent in the 1970s to less than 65 percent in 2010s, and in the Not Free Democracies, almost an identical fall. In Partly Free Democracies, the fall is from about 73 percent in 1970s to about 63 percent in 2010s.

Regionally, in Oceania, from over 95 percent 1950s to almost close to 70 percent in 2010. In Europe, from about 85 percent to less than 65 percent in 2010. In the Americas, it has remained the same from 1950s to 2010. In Asia only, it has risen from a little above 60 percent in 1950s to a little less than 70 percent in 2010. In Europe, established democracies [other than those which became free after the Cold War], the voting percentage which was around 85 percent in the 1970s, has come down to about 70 percent in 2010-15. In post-Communist countries, the fall has been from over 75 percent in 1990s to far less than 60 percent in 2010-15, a fall of 25 percent.

The voter interest in the US is declining even in the presidential elections in the US. The voting percentage in 1962 was almost 63 percent. It slid below 60 percent in six elections from 1972 to 1992, fell to 49 percent in 1996, 50 percent in 2000 and now hovers around an average of 55 percent. This shows the people's general fatigue with democracy in all liberal democracies. Some of the liberal democracies have compulsory voting. Countries with compulsory voting, show seven to eight percent higher voting than countries without compulsory voting.

The secular fall in the participation of people in liberal democracy is only one half of the story. The other half of the story is even more important.

### **Young Voters -- future of democracy -- have declining interest in politics**

The IDEA data also shows that only 43 percent of voters less than the age of 25 vote, 33 percent of them never vote at all and 23 percent of them vote occasionally. It means that 57 percent of the youth do not take serious interest in political affairs at all. This demographic feature of voting does not augur well for democracy. Unless

youth are socialised into political participation, neither will they have proper training as a constituent of the polity, nor will democracy be meaningful.

The conclusion is irresistible that liberal democracies are declining in depth and are turning into elite and top of the pyramid affairs, which itself shows its illiberal character, and Indian democracy is deepening both in mass base and bottom of the pyramid affair, which itself shows its liberal character.

### **Researches show liberal democracies are failing because of the very idea of liberalism**

A research paper focussed on the United Kingdom by Qasir Shah [UCL Institute of Education] titled “The Democratic Paradigm: A Vanishing Act”, published in *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, explains why Western democracies are fatiguing, if not declining. It says:

*Firstly: the modern state is so complex that great expertise is required on the part of those who govern; secondly: people are too busy to engage in the sort of participatory democracy practised in ancient Athens; thirdly: the heterogeneity of modern society precludes such participation; and finally: a neo-liberal vision of the world which sees the individual possessed of superior rights, unencumbered by state interference.*

*Given that 54% of the respondents in the Audit of Political Engagement report stated they were too busy for political involvement, one might agree that many citizens no longer see politics as being central to their identity, due to their many social and economic interests. However, there is a sizable minority who expressed a desire to participate both at a local level (43 percent) and national level (38 percent). These proportions increase in the upper two socio-economic groups AB (50 percent and 43 percent) and C1 (50 percent and 45 percent).*

The scary findings -- that the “majority people are too busy for political involvement”, that, “due to their many social and economic interests, politics is not central to their identity” -- point to the emaciation of the collective idea of nation and state in the name of individual liberties. And based on his finding that liberalism makes the society heterogeneous, the author finally concludes:

*I believe the heterogeneity argument, in its extreme form, can lead to the neo-liberal idea of the primacy of the individual, and the prioritisation of individual liberties. This is because individuals are unique and have different wishes, desires and needs. Since the 1980s, with the rise of Thatcher and Reagan, politically the individual has been held at the heart of society, with a radical rollback of the state, with laissez-faire economic policies leading to: deregulation of markets, privatisation and radical tax cuts – citizens have been encouraged to become more self-sufficient and self-interested.*

Nothing more needs to be added. The very liberties, which the democratic polity guarantees to the individual, makes the individual so self-centred that nothing, including the very system of which the individual is the beneficiary, is more important for the individual. Result, the individual does not feel part of even the collective that grants him all that he enjoys. This is the state of liberal democracies in the West. In contrast, the “less

liberal” Indian democracy is robust, with the socially, economically and educationally marginalised bottom spread groups dominating the democratic process.

## XX. Liberal democracies shifting emphasis to the civilisation paradigm

A Google Scholar research blog by two scholars on the subject of “democratic backsliding” in Central and Eastern Europe published by the the London School of Economics and Political Science [titled “We must go beyond the “backsliding paradigm” to understand what is happening to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe” dated 17.4.2020] says: “The issue of Democratic Backsliding” in Central and Eastern Europe has received substantial attention in recent years and many observers are now concerned that the corona virus could exacerbate the problem.” The authors say that:

*In recent years, Central and Eastern European (CEE) democracies – once hailed as remarkable success stories of democratic transformation – have increasingly attracted media and academic attention as cases of democratic reversal. The consensus is that democracies across the region are in decline and some might be “backsliding” towards semi-authoritarian hybrid regimes or even full authoritarianism. Since the election of illiberal populist governments with absolute parliamentary majorities in Hungary in 2010 and Poland in 2015, these two once model democratisers are now seen as models of democratic backsliding – a trend that some fear may be turbocharged by the ways in which these government have dealt with the coronavirus emergency.*

The authors find that mention of democratic backsliding has risen four- fold between 2016 and 2018, and say that all democracies in Central and East Europe, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic have “become potential backsliders into semi authoritarian hybrid or even full authoritarian regimes. The reason for this is civilisational rather than economic or political.”

The key findings in a research by the popular Freedom House, founded in 1941 by Wendell Willkie and Eleanor Roosevelt as its first honorary Chairpersons, which conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights, titled ‘Freedom in the world, 2019 Democracy in crisis’ shows:

- ***Democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades in 2017 as its basic tenets, including guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law, came under attack around the world.***
- *Seventy-one countries suffered net declines in political rights and civil liberties, with only 35 registering gains. This marked the 12th consecutive year of decline in global freedom.*
- *The United States retreated from its traditional role as both a champion and an exemplar of democracy amid an accelerating decline in American political rights and civil liberties.*

- Over the period since the 12-year global slide began in 2006, 113 countries have seen a net decline, and only 62 have experienced a net improvement.

And, it specifically noted the US withdrawal from promoting democracy and freedom, and mentioned that:

*Even when he chose to acknowledge America's treaty alliances with fellow democracies, the president spoke of cultural or civilizational ties rather than shared recognition of universal rights; his trips abroad rarely featured any mention of the word "democracy." Indeed, the American leader expressed feelings of admiration and even personal friendship for some of the world's most loathsome strongmen and dictators.*

*This marks a sharp break from other US presidents in the post-war period, who cooperated with certain authoritarian regimes for strategic reasons, but never wavered from a commitment to democracy as the best form of government and the animating force behind American foreign policy. It also reflects an inability—or unwillingness—by the United States to lead democracies in effectively confronting the growing threat from Russia and China, and from the other states that have come to emulate their authoritarian approach.*

A clear sign of fatigue with a pure politico-economic paradigm is visible in the democratic world. It is true that equally clear signals of fatigue with autocracies are perceived in non-democratic parts of the world. Because of transparency in democracy, the fatigue is openly seen in democracies. The fatigue remains concealed underground in autocracies. Autocracies will look strong till hours before their collapse, just as it happened when the Berlin Wall collapsed, or the Soviet Union. So, neither of the two pure politico-economic materialist paradigms -- one wedded to democracy and the other wedded to autocracy -- will sustain in the long run. As for the sustainability of the capitalist order and democracy, it may be worthwhile to recall Professor Lester Thurow's theory in the late 1990s that Communist nations which disregarded competition, failed the test of efficiency in the competition from the more efficient capitalism, but capitalism without national competition like firms, will grow resistant to change and stagnate. His prescription to arrest the decline was a civilisational approach --- transition from the individualist democratic paradigm to the collective civilisational paradigm. He told Western society in no uncertain terms that it needs long-run communalism to supplement its short-run individualism -- which virtually meant aligning the individualist democratic paradigm to the collective civilisational paradigm. Communalism -- even though its meaning in India is distorted and even perverted -- is civilisational collectivism, while individualism is atomising and destroying civilisational assets, consisting of families and societies.

Actually, there is and should be no contradiction between democratic and civilisational paradigms. The short term, even better said the short sighted, liberal democratic paradigm, which has been for long ignoring the long term civilisational paradigm, is increasingly beginning to come under stress. Civilisational paradigm is not anti-democracy, but actually it builds a morally sound normative democracy in the palace of individualism liberal democracy. The proponents of liberal democracy are wrong in thinking that mentioning civilisation or culture promotes illiberal democracy. The decline that is being noticed by studies like the Freedom House study, which graphs the decline from 2010 and steeply from 2014, is based on the liberal democratic perspective. It is not the

decline of democracy, but the decline of liberalism. Liberalism is actually tending to destroy the civilisational foundations of democracy and in the process democracy itself. Liberalism has injected hostility between civilisation and democracy. The reason for the decline of liberal democracy, which the Freedom House study sees, and its tendency to slide into autocracy, is rooted in the hostility of liberal democracy to the underpinnings of the civilisational urges of the people. The contradiction between the democratic and civilisational paradigms needs to be resolved in the larger interest to save the world of democracy from decline. The world needs a review of and relief from the pure politico-economic paradigm and be replaced by an alternative which integrates it to the civilisational paradigm. Only if the West stops grading democracies as liberal and illiberal can democracies be saved. So long as liberal democracy ignores the long-term civilisational urges of the people, democracies will slip into autocracies.

## **XXI. Liberal Democracy to cease to be the standard for democracies**

Post-World War II West began setting standards of not just democracy, but also graded what is liberal democracy and what is illiberal and so on. The West had held out its brand of liberal democracy as the universal standard for all, and to grade, credit and discredit different democracies in the world. In the post-Covid-19 world order, it is bound to recognise the diversity in democracies -- as democracy doesn't work in the same way everywhere. If democracy has to emerge as the paradigm for the future world order as it seems likely, it cannot be on the basis of Western understanding of what democracy is.

The test of what makes a society democratic is the capacity of its core society to live with diversities and differences in ideas, beliefs and lifestyle. From this perspective, the core Indian society -- consisting of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains -- has demonstrated the capacity to live with different beliefs and divergent Gods without conflict. In fact, even in terms of illustrative personalities who guide core societies, both Rama, who obeyed his father implicitly, and Prahalada who explicitly defied his, are considered divine and revered; both Sita, who totally obeyed her husband, and Mira, who totally defied hers, are considered divine and revered; Lakshmana, who surrendered to his brother, and Vibheeshana, who defied his, are considered respectable and accepted. The capacity of a society to accept total contradictions without enforced model behaviour is basically democratic and liberal. The test of a democracy is whether there is a culture of tolerance. From Swami Vivekananda in his address to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago on September 11, 1893, to the Supreme Court of India's decision to revisit the apex court's earlier definition of Hindutva as a way of life and hear arguments for and against the plea in March this year, all are uniform in their assessment that ancient Hindu society has been tolerant and that was why other religions could take root in India and flourish. This is something unheard of in other societies or nations, particularly in Western nations, which have taken on the sole responsibility of standardising and grading democracies, and certifying them as liberal, partly liberal and illiberal, and so on. There is a huge difference between the individualism-centric democracies of the West, which have no doctrinal tolerance and demand individual tolerance, and doctrinally-tolerant society-centric democracies like India. The West needed to promote unbridled individualism to counter the doctrinal intolerance which Indian society was not needed to do.

With the result, Western democracies and even economic models founded on the Anthropology of Modernity, which is defined by unbridled individualism, delegitimise communities, societies and families. That will work where long-held traditions are destroyed, but not in Asian and African societies which have live traditions and are family and community-oriented. Save China, which is a special case because of its authoritarian philosophy with empire building instincts within and outside, Asian societies have an inherent sense of democratic functioning because of social, racial and religious diversities. Asian nations are not homogenous socially, racially or religiously.

A 2014 Pew Research Center study says Asia leads in religious diversity. Living in harmony with diversity, and not elections through ballot papers, is the essence of democracy. A society of diversity, which lives together in peace, is socially and culturally democratic. Despite being regarded as not liberal democracies, Asian democracies seem to have performed better than liberal democracies in terms of public order. According to a UN study, the Asian homicide rate, which is a critical index of peace in society, is the lowest in the world. A 2019 UN report on Homicide shows that the homicide rate in Asia is not only one tenth of the Americas, but since the 1990s, the Asian rate has fallen by 36 percent.

If in the emerging post-Covid-19 world there has to be an alliance of democracies, the first condition for that will be that the West must cease to think it is the norm and the centre of the democratic world. According to Seraphine F. Maerz, Anna Lührmann, Sebastian Hellmeier, Sandra Grahn and Staffan I. Lindberg Department of Political Science, V-Dem Institute, [University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden] in their research paper “State of the world 2019: autocratisation surges – resistance grows” the Western democracies constitute just 14 percent of the world’s population. India added, it becomes 30 percent. All hues of electoral democracies put together, it is 46 percent. Western nations need to be educated on how their model of individualist democracy is fatiguing and threatening to fail so that they would hopefully stop grading democracies of non-Western nations as liberal, partly liberal and illiberal, while accepting the Marxist polity for respectful engagement and making true and innately socially tolerant democracies feel inferior. This western hypocrisy should stop in the larger interest of an alliance of democracies. The West should accept that all democracies evolve according to the socio-cultural conditions of the societies in which they are rooted.

## **XXII. Vibrant democratic India to redefine the new democratic paradigm**

Even as Western liberal democracies seem to be fatiguing in more than one criterion, Indian democracy is becoming increasingly vibrant. In contrast to the falling voter participation in the liberal democracies of the West, Indian democracy started with less than 50 percent in two Parliament elections in 1950s, then it began averaging 60 percent till 2009 and in 2014, it topped 66 percent and rose to 67.4 percent thereafter, testifying to the people’s rising participation in the democratic process. It is not just in higher voter participation, but also in terms of participation by the financially, educationally and socially weaker segments of voters that Indian democracy has shown its bottom spread character, in contrast to the liberal democracies of the West.

## **Top down elite liberal democracy Vs Bottom spread Indian democracy**

A comparison of Federal Election Commission data via the National Voter Turnout in Federal Elections: 1960–2008 from the most liberal democracy in the world, the US, and the data of Linz, Juan; Alfred Stephan; Yogendra Yadav (2007). *Democracy and Diversity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, shows how liberal democracy in the US is elite in character and at the top of the pyramid in structure, while Indian democracy, labelled as not so liberal, is mass in character and is bottom of the pyramid in structure.

## **High Income Group Votes more in the US, Low Income group votes more in India**

In terms of voters of high and low income level participation, while 36 percent of the lowest [20 percent] Quintile voters vote in US, 57 percent of them vote in India; 57 percent of the next Quintile vote in US, 65 percent of them vote in India; 59 percent of the next Quintile vote in US, 60 percent of them vote in India; 63 percent of the highest Quintile vote in US, only 47 percent of them vote in India. It shows that income level wise, the higher the income, the higher is the voting percentage in the US, while it is the inverse in India, the lower the income, the higher the voting percentage.

Lower the income, lower the voter participation in the 18 EU nations is brought out in a study titled “Income, inequality, and electoral participation” by Christopher J Anderson [The University of Warwick]. It says:

*“Based on individual and macro level data collected in eighteen OECD democracies, we find that income significantly affects electoral participation. At the level of individual citizens, we find that the effects of income differentials are essentially linear, such that individuals who are below the median income in society are less likely to participate in elections, while those above the median income are more likely to do so. Moreover, our results show that the effect of income on electoral participation increases monotonically.”*

## **Educated people vote more in the US, while the less educated vote more in India**

In terms of education, while 38 of the ‘no high schooled’ US voters vote, 57 percent of the illiterate vote in India; 43 percent of ‘some high schooled’ US voters vote, 83 percent of up to middle school Indians vote; 57 percent of high school graduates and 66 percent of the some college graduates, 79 percent of the college graduates vote in US, 57 of the college graduates vote in India; while 84 percent of the post graduates vote in US, only 41 percent of post graduates in India vote. Here again, higher the education, greater the voting percentage in the US, lower the education, greater the voting percentage in India.

## **Socially higher ones vote more in the US, Socially weaker ones vote more in India**

In terms of social criteria, 56 percent of Whites vote. In contrast, 50 percent of the Blacks and only 27 percent of Latinos vote. In India, 60 percent of Hindus [upper caste], 58 percent of Hindus [OBC], 75 percent of Scheduled Caste, 59 percent of Schedule Tribes and 70 percent of Muslims vote. It shows that minority participation in

voting is less in the US and more in India. The deprived Scheduled Caste voting is 25 percent more than others'. Likewise, Muslim voting is 17 percent more than others'.

### **Not just US, in UK too lower segments of voters participate less in the democratic process**

In the context of the UK, Qasir Shah notices the same trend as in the US. Qasir Shah says: "However, the even greater scandal is the marginalisation of the lower two socio-economic classes in political participation with C2 (34% and 28%), and DE (31% and 30%) professing a desire to participate."

In terms of income, education and social criteria, democracy in the US is elite and top of the pyramid in structure, while Indian democracy is mass-based and follows the bottom of the pyramid in structure. And yet, in the Western discourse, US democracy is liberal and Indian democracy is illiberal.

The Indian democratic spirit is civilisational and is a millennial evolution, whereas, the idea of democracy in the West is a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unless this element is discussed, the emerging threat to the democratic world from within and outside cannot be handled and nor can democracy be saved.

## **XXIII. Civilisationally compatible democracy as the narrative of India**

The contemporary Indian democratic spirit, temper or structure is no accident of post-Independent history. It all evolved over millennia. India's democratic spirit was a product of ancient India's religious and spiritual discipline of dialogue and deliberation on the differences between religious groups rather than settle them through force. This was the crucial difference between India and other religious civilisations. The cultural differential of democracy has been found in the survey of the oldest global think tank on democracy -- Freedom House.

### **Freedom House sees "Strong Correlation between Hinduism and electoral democracy"**

Freedom House, in its Report on the "World The Annual Survey of Political Rights & Civil Liberties 1999-2000", has revealed an interesting and instructive aspect of the world of democracy and its relationship with cultures and religion with reference to all major religions of the world, Christianity, Islam Hinduism and Buddhism in all countries. The Annual Survey "continue(d) to reveal interesting patterns in the relationship between cultures and political development" It said that while there are broad differences within civilisations, and while democracy and human rights find expression in a wide array of cultures and beliefs, the survey shows some important variations in the relationship between religious belief or tradition and political freedom." The survey found [as of year 1999-2000]:

- A predominantly Christian country is more than five times as likely to be free and democratic as it is to be repressive and non-democratic.

- India is predominantly Hindu and has the world's second largest Muslim population.
- The Islamic world remains the most resistant to the spread of democracy and civil liberties, especially the Arab countries. Only one country with a Muslim majority (Mali) is free, 14 are partly free and 26 are not free. Only eight have electoral democracies.

On India, the survey said:

*There is also a strong correlation between electoral democracy and Hinduism (India, Mauritius, and Nepal), and there are a significant number of free countries among traditionally Buddhist societies and those in which Buddhism is the most widespread faith (Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, and Thailand).*

Traditionally, India's deliberative democracy, religious and cultural impulses, seamlessly transformed into contemporary India's participative democracy. This is the short statement of Freedom House.

On the Freedom House Survey Report, Tunku Varadarajan former editor of Newsweek and presently Virginia Hobbs Carpenter Research Fellow in Journalism at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and a contributing editor at [POLITICO](#) Europe, wrote in belief.com [2000], leaving aside the vexing question of whether India is truly democratic:

*"I would like, nonetheless, to look favorably on the assertion that there is a strong correlation between electoral democracy and Hinduism. The more relevant question to ask, therefore, is this: does a society in which Hindus predominate--a civitas in which Hindus are the preponderant religious group--furnish conditions in which a modern democratic political system can flourish? The answer, in my opinion, is yes."*

The correlation between the Hindu -- read Indian -- civilisation and electoral democracy of contemporary India was no accident or subject of the Encyclical or Fatwa of any religious authority. It was a cultural evolutionary process with continuity over millennia tolerant religious philosophies played a key role. This process yielded grass root social deliberative democracy in India long before the advent of the Greco-Roman model of political democracy.

## **Indian Culture of debate and dialogue and Deliberative Democracy**

In a perceptive policy research working paper titled "Deliberative Democracy in India", Ramya Parthasarathy Vijayendra Rao [World Bank Group Development Research Group Poverty and Inequality Team] dated March 2017, the authors have

*"unpacked the historical roots of Indian deliberation in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, emphasising the ways in which religious traditions fostered a culture of debate and dialogue."and have traced the roots of deliberative democracy in ancient India.*

The paper, which is under the aegis of the World Bank Research Group, is significant for three reasons, which are not normally found in Indian public discourse, or in the discourse outside India. One, it compares the different ways contemporary democracy works in the West and in India. Two, it traces the origin of deliberative democracy in India and the evolution of participatory democracy in the West. Three, it sees the alignment of deliberative democracy and participative democracy in India.

The authors preface their concept of deliberative democracy by first asking how defying all preconditions at the rise of Western democracy, India has a distinctly Indian democracy.

*India, as is well known, has a resilient democracy. Indian elections have been hotly contested, widely inclusive, well conducted, and integrated into a robust and active political sphere. The consistency and quality of Indian democracy is not only anomalous in the post-colonial world, but also stands as rebuttal to much of Western liberal democratic theory, which posits a set of preconditions to democracy that India sorely lacks. As historian, Sudipta Kaviraj, has noted, “Viewed from the angle of conventional political theory, Indian democracy is inexplicable. It defies all the preconditions that theory lays down for the success of democratic government” (Kaviraj 2011, p. 2). These preconditions are defined by those that were present at the rise of Western democracy — “namely, the presence of a strong bureaucratic state, capitalist production, industrialization, the secularization of society (or at least the prior existence of a secular state), and relative economic prosperity” (Kaviraj 2011, p.2) — but are relatively absent in contemporary India, where poverty and illiteracy are still widely prevalent. **Despite these conditions, however, India has sustained democracy, and done so in ways that are distinctly Indian** (Khilnani 1999)*

Then the authors unpack, as they say, the deliberative democracy in India.

*A large body of literature has sought to understand why democracy has thrived in the Indian context (e.g. Khilnani 1999; Kaviraj 2011; Keane 2009; Chatterjee and Katznelson 2012). One proposed and contested component of that explanation has been the long history of public reasoning and debate on the subcontinent — an “argumentative tradition” that is intimately connected with the development of democracy (Sen 2005, Guha 2005). Indeed, deliberation has its roots in classic normative conceptions of democracy; it derives from the premise that “democracy revolves around the transformation rather than simply the aggregation of preferences...” (Elster 1998).*

What the authors mean is that “religious traditions fostered a culture of debate and dialogue” such as the distinctly Indian religious cultural practice of Tarka Shastra and Poorva Paksha, which are extraordinarily disciplined methods of dialogue and debate. This needs to be explained to make the foundations of the Indian worldview itself understandable in the contemporary democratic discourse which is actually sans enlightened and disciplined discourse.

### **Tarka Shastra and Purva Paksha foundations of deliberative democracy**

Ancient India’s discipline of Tarka Shastra, which laid the rules of the dialogue between two opposing religious views and Purva Paksha, which formulated how to critique the other view, were the main reasons

why India avoided wars, violence and bloodshed over religion. The debates between Hinduism and Buddhism, and within Hinduism and among different Hindu schools of thought, were founded on the principles of Tarka Shashtra and Poorvapakha. The most celebrated debate was between Adi Sankara and Mandana Mishra 2500 years ago or 1500 years ago, depending on the wide divergence over the date of Adi Sankara's birth, in which the debater who gets heated up because of anger was declared the loser! The chief principle of a debate was the total absence of heat and anger. This tradition prevented wars over which God was superior.

Pawan Verma in his book “Adi Shankaracharya: Hinduism's Greatest Thinker” expresses his conviction that the Advadic vision developed by Sankara offers an ideal matrix for the unity and integrity of India. Sankara, by his concept of six systems of philosophy, brought about unity and harmony among the diverse schools of Hindu philosophy, and also by expounding the impersonal Brahman beyond all forms of Gods as the Ultimate Truth. Sankara's formula of harmony and unity did not invalidate any form of worship but set the idea of one unifying Impersonal Truth as the ultimate point of self realisation beyond all forms of worship. That is what made the Indian religious fabric tolerant. Deliberative culture was the basis of tolerant religious traditions of India. That is why two judges of the Supreme Court of India went to the extent of saying that it was because of the culture of Hinduism [which fostered tolerance through dialogue] that enabled other religions to find shelter in India. Bharucha, J. in Dr. M. Ismail Faruqui and Ors. etc. Vs. Union of India & Ors. etc., 1994 (6) SCC 360, (Ayodhya case), in the separate opinion for himself and Ahmadi, J. (as he then was), observed:

*“...Hinduism is a tolerant faith. It is that tolerance that has enabled Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism to find shelter and support upon this land....”*

This celebrated tolerance, unknown elsewhere in the world when it evolved in India, was the direct product of dialogue and debate. Religious tolerance in India rooted in the ancient Indian tradition of dialogue and debate extended to other spheres of life. This is what made deliberative democracy work in India despite all inequalities

## **Tolerance is the foundation of deliberative culture**

The combination of monotheistic philosophy -- Advaita [Monistic] and Visishtadvaita [Qualified Monistic] philosophies on the one hand - and divergent approaches, understandings and Gods is what makes India' religiously tolerant. It is such an extremely strange combination that Western religious, philosophical and secular scholarship rooted in the monotheistic worldview cannot easily digest or unravel.

Actually, a large body of emerging writing sees intolerance rooted in the monotheistic worldview and the divergent approaches to Gods as tolerant. Jonathan Kirsch, an American attorney, and a writer and columnist for the Los Angeles Times, and a best-selling author of books on the Bible and Judaism, says in his book “God Against the Gods: The History of the War Between Monotheism and Polytheism” *“that only a single deity is worthy of worship for the simple reason that only a single deity exists”, and is responsible for three millennia of religious intolerance and persecution, up to and including the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Those events he terms as “only the most recent example of the violence that men and*

women are inspired to commit against their fellow human beings by their true belief in the Only True God”, and says that Polytheism is tolerant. The issue in the Indian context is no Monotheism Vs Polytheism which is again a Western construct. Hinduism is not Polytheistic.

The scholarly view [e.g. “Hindu Deities” [2019] by Julius Lipner Cambridge University; A Guide to Hinduism by Maya Warrier [2006] Warwick University; Hinduism in Modern India by Vinay Lal UCLA Social Studies] is that Hinduism is not Polytheistic [worshiping many Gods] but Polygnostic [having many understandings]. Arguing in her scholarly paper “The One and Many Gods of Hinduism” in Cross Roads [2007] -- an interdisciplinary journal for the study of history, philosophy, religion and classics -- takes that view says in the Abstract to her paper:

*Hinduism is commonly thought to represent polytheism. This label reflects a superficial perception of how the gods were and are understood. This essay explores the idea that Hinduism, (itself a relatively modern, externally imposed label), has many understandings... that it is polygnostic. It takes a journey through the evolution of a range of Hindu conceptions of deity, from the philosophical and abstract through to the deeply personal. Although such modern commentators as Richard Dawkins claim that the possibility of Hinduism including a monotheistic stream is deceptive, this essay traces monotheistic stances through a range of India’s rich theological and philosophical trends. Noting that individual Hindus are just as likely to think that: ‘There are many gods’; ‘only one god’; ‘many gods in one’; or that ‘god has two aspects’; ‘god is a trinity’; ‘The world is god’; ‘I am god’; ‘I am close, but different to god’; god is love’; ‘god is beyond qualities’, and even, ‘there is no god’, the essay supports the now famous quotation from Crooke, that “among all the great religions of the world, there is none more catholic than Hinduism”.*

Cathy Byrne, Research Project Manager, Southern Cross University, has to her credit several positions and is a publisher of several scholarly papers, Cathy is interested in all aspects of religion as a powerful, (and understudied) sociological, ethical, structuring presence. Therefore, Hinduism is a religion with many understandings rather than a religion with multiple gods. In its innate capacity of “many understandings” inheres in the tolerance in Hinduism.

## **XXIV. Seamless integration of India’s deliberative democracy into electoral democracy**

The Indian institution of local governments, the Panchayat system, dating back to more than 4000 years, has survived numerous political changes and upheavals in the ancient and medieval periods till the advent of British colonial rule under which the pattern of working of local bodies underwent marked changes. The British actually re energised and leveraged the traditional Panchayats, making efficient use of them.

### **Panchayats in Ancient India**

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission Report [2007] on Local Self Governance says:

*“The concept of local self government is not new to our country and there is mention of community assemblies in the*

*Vedic texts. Around 600 B.C., the territory north of the river Ganga comprising modern day north Bihar and eastern U.P. was under the suzerainty of small republics called Janapadas among which Lichhavis were the most powerful. In these Janapadas, the affairs of the State were conducted by an assembly consisting of local chieftains. In the post Mauryan times as well, there existed republics of Malavas and the Kshudrakas where decisions were taken by “sabhas”. The Greek Ambassador, Megasthenes, who visited the court of Chandragupta Maurya in 303 B.C. described the City Council which governed Pataliputra – comprising six committees with 30 members. Similar participatory structures also existed in South India. In the Chola Kingdoms, the village council, together with its sub-committees and wards, played an important part in administration, arbitrated disputes and managed social affairs. They were also responsible for revenue collection, assessing individual contribution and negotiating the collective assessment with the King’s representative. They had virtual ownership of village waste land, with right of sale, and they were active in irrigation, road building and related work. Their transactions, recorded on the walls of village temples, show a vigorous community life and are a permanent memorial to the best practices in early Indian polity.”*

India’s deliberative democratic traditions are rooted in India’s religion, culture and sociology.

### **British leverage on the village deliberative democracy**

The policy research working paper of the World Bank Group Development Research Group Poverty and Inequality traces how the Panchayat system in India was integrated with the colonial administration. It captured the British policy on the Panchayats thus: Henry Maine, who was sent to India in the 1860s to advise the British government on legal matters, came across thriving indigenous systems of autonomous village governments, whose structure and practice shared many characteristics of participatory democracy (Maine 1876). Maine was influenced by J.S. Mill, who argued for democratic participation at the local level (Mill 1869). Maine theorised the village governments and community as an alternative to the centralised state; these village communities, led by a council of elders, were not subject to a set of laws articulated from above, but had more fluid legal and governance structures adapted to changing conditions, while maintaining strict adherence to traditional customs (Mantena 2010). This argument had a profound impact on the colonial administration: As India became fertile territory for experiments in governance, the liberal British Viceroy, Lord Ripon, instituted local government reforms in 1882 primarily for providing “political education,” and reviving and extending India’s indigenous system of government.

### **Mahatma Gandhi’s proposal for Panchayat Raj rejected**

Beyond influencing colonial policy, Maine’s description of self-reliant Indian village communities came to shape the thinking of Mohandas Gandhi, who made it a central tenet of his vision for an independent India. Gandhi’s philosophy of decentralised economic and political power, viewed the self-reliant village as emblematic of a “perfect democracy,” ensuring equality across castes and religions and self-sufficiency in all needs. These villages would come to form “an alternative Panchayat Raj, understood as a non-hierarchical, decentralised polity of loosely federated village associations and powers”. Stressing non-violence and cooperation, this

Gandhian ideal elevated local participation — not just for the political education of India's new citizens, but as a form of democratic self-governance. Gandhi's proposal, however, was defeated during the Constituent Assembly Debates.

### **In 1992, Constitution Amendment aligns the deliberative democracy of Panchayat and aligns it with the contemporary participative democracy**

Thus the World Bank Group paper traces the historical roots of Indian deliberative democracy to culture of debate and dialogue fostered by religious traditions and explores the interplay between Western liberal philosophers and Indian political thinkers, including Gandhi and Ambedkar on participatory democracy in India. Outlining the fraught debate around local village democracy in the Constituent Assembly and highlighting the continued dialogue between Indian and Western ideas in the push for greater participatory development, finally ends the probe with the current incarnation of state-sponsored deliberation in India – namely, village assemblies known as gram sabhas under the constitutionally mandated system of Indian village democracy or Panchayati Raj to align the deliberative democracy of the past with the participatory democracy of the contemporary times.

This ancient deliberative democratic model of India was delegitimised when the Constitution was being made. It was kept on a life support system by making it a non-mandatory vision in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution which said that the State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with powers and authority to enable them to function as units of self-government. This vision was realised by Constitution amendments in 1992. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has provided constitutional status to local village bodies in India that had existed for thousands of years as a unit of self-rule at the village level.

### **India, the largest participatory democracy in the world with 3.1 million elected representations**

The outcome of the implementation of Panchayat Raj was the phenomenal participation of the bottom of the spread distant society in India in the villages, hills and forests and self-governance unmatched in any part of the democratic world. India is today not only the largest voted democracy, but also the largest elected representative democracy in the world.

As of summer 2017, there are a total of 267,428 local government bodies of which 262,771 are rural and 4,657 urban. Of the rural local governments, 632 are zila parishads at the district level, 6,672 are panchayat samitis at the block level, and 255,466 are gram panchayats at the village level. Urban local bodies include municipal corporations for cities, municipalities for larger towns and town panchayats for smaller towns. Both urban and local governments are governed by state-level legislation, which determines local tax-raising powers. Following the 2013 local election, 37.1 percent of councillors were women, and in the 2015/16 local elections, government expenditure was 16.3 percent of the total government expenditure. Presently, there are 3.1 million elected representatives and 1.3 million women representatives.

For a total of 101 city corporations and 1,430 municipalities and 2,091 nagarpalikas in the country, elections have now been held two to three times across the country. The number of elected representatives for all the urban local bodies is about 70,000. Of the 3,640 chairpersons of these bodies at least one-third are women. The All India Council of Mayors is also presently headed by a woman.

As compared to any other democracy claiming to be liberal and modern, Indian democracy has the latest and unmatched bottom spread voting and is a democracy with the largest number of elected representatives in the world. In contrast, the USA, the second largest democracy in the world, according to the US Census, the number of local body units in 1992 was 85006 and the number of elected representatives was 5.13 lakhs. In 2012, the number of local bodies was 89004, but the number of elected representatives is not published by the US Census. Even if a proportionate rise is taken, the number of elected representatives cannot exceed 5.38 lakh. Data indicates that local bodies in India are three times that of the US and representatives are almost six times that of the US -- which demonstrates the incomparable depth and reach of democracy in India.

More than three million elected representatives have a direct stake in the national administration as representatives with powers at the national, state and local levels.

### **Financial allocation Rs 2 lakh crores [\$30 billion] for 5 years**

The local bodies are not just active social circles, but also have financial muscle. They also receive huge fund allocations from the Finance Commission, which is appointed under the Constitution to distribute national revenue to Central, State and Local governments. Over the last three decades, successive Finance Commissions have assigned more funds to Panchayati Raj institutions at all three levels – village level, block level and district level. In order to strengthen self-governance at the local level, more than Rs 2 lakh crore has been allocated to Panchayati Raj institutions in five years. The aggregate amount allocated to Panchayati Raj institutions in 26 states of the country works out to be Rs 2,00,292 crore and per capita allocation works out to be Rs 488 per person ( \$30 billion) in five years.

### **Panchayat at the forefront of the war against Covid-19**

Village panchayats of India have been at the forefront of the battle against Covid-19. The Prime Minister congratulated village headmen for preventing the spread of Covid-19 in their respective places by creating awareness and arranging checking and quarantine for migrants coming from outside. Millions of Panchayat officials ensured that the spread of Covid-19 is largely an urban phenomenon. One of the reasons why India's record in tackling the spread of Covid-19 is less than half of the world's average, its mortality rates less than a fourth of the world's, its recovery rate is 63 percent against the world's 60 percent, is the reach and spread of the deliberative democratic structure of India which dates back to millennia. This could not have been achieved without the formal integration and recognition of the traditional Panchayats in the larger constitutional state. The Indian media has extensively reported on the phenomenal role of Panchayats in confronting the Covid-19 challenge. The Times of India newspaper [15.5.2020] reported in detail the briefing of the National Institute of

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) on the Covid-19 management by Panchayats. The report said:

*With migrant workers making their way back to homes, Gram Panchayats are ensuring that returning workers adhere to a compulsory 14-day quarantine along with family members in the villages so that there is no possible transmission of COVID-19.*

*The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), which is assisting the people with crisis management amid Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, said that in case the workers do not have a house of their own to self-quarantine or their house is too small for the same, the Gram Panchayat (GP) will have to make necessary arrangements by converting Anganwadis or schools into quarantine centres or by establishing a makeshift quarantine space.*

*NIRDPR, vide a release, revealed how the sarpanches are dealing with the migrant workers' exodus to villages amid the COVID-19 crisis. The GPs have issued the same guidelines as the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and are recording the details of each returning worker, including their name, sex, age, family details along with where they work and how they arrived at the village. They are also recording symptoms of Covid-19 if any.*

*They are also ensuring that the workers should sanitise themselves and their belongings (mobile phones, bags, luggage) before entering the village premises.*

*As per the guidelines issued by GPs, if anyone exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, they should be referred to the nearest health centre. Only one family member can take care of the patient in this case. Further, nobody should touch the patient's clothes or hang them in public places or should be allowed to meet the patient at any cost.*

*Some of the don'ts include no crowding at places, no spitting in public, do not venture outside unnecessarily, etc.*

*They are also ensuring that no villager goes hungry in these difficult times by making sure that the poor have access to the ration promised by the government, starting community kitchens to feed the poor, and by engaging volunteers in food preparation and distribution.*

This phenomenal work by Panchayats, which through elected, are almost a voluntary body of millions of people's representatives who invest almost their whole time, has resulted in rural India being largely safe from the Covid-19 spread.

Indian intellectual, strategic thinkers and think tanks need to be sensitised about, and they need to expound to the world about, the depth of Indian democracy which dates back millennia and change the global narrative of democracy as defined by unbridled liberalism and ultra liberals as the only legitimate and write an Indian narrative of democracy as defined by individualism linked to civilisation, not individualism divorced from civilisation. This inevitably calls for a relook at the contemporary sense of unbridled human rights which is altogether divorced from human duties to the alternative idea of human duties linked to human rights as Mahatma Gandhi envisioned.

## XXV. Shift from unbridled human rights to duties based paradigm of Mahatma Gandhi

There is no doubt that the [ultra]liberal social and democratic paradigm is clearly weakening and fatiguing because of unbridled liberalism. Unbridled individual rights sans ordinary normative moral duties even to parents and children, and others near and dear, has made humans so self-centred, as Qasir Shah's findings show, that it is weakening the very liberal democracy and the state which dispenses the liberal order. This exclusive focus on self has also eroded the civilisational foundations, which is the collective consciousness of the people. There is a clash between ultra liberal individuals and the collective civilisational consciousness of people which manifests developments within Europe like the rise of contrarian illiberal thoughts in Eastern Europe, particularly in Hungary and Poland, ["Caesarean politics in Hungary and Poland" Robert Sata & Ireneusz Paweł Karolewski] which are not to be taken lightly. The concept of human rights based on atomised individualism has been taken to such an extreme by the West, to the extent of even breaking nations and communities, that it cannot be sustained. The world order needs nation-state actors and nation-states cannot exist with liberalism eroding and dominating over the very idea of a nation-state.

### Unbridled human rights needs review

This is particularly so when the UN Declaration of Human Rights is impotent against an autocratic state which suppresses human rights like China, but it can be used by international bodies like the UNHCR, Amnesty International and a host of semi-government and non government bodies only against democracies like India, which has the greatest diversity of ideas and people. Diversity, not individualism, is the best safeguard against human rights violations. Human diversity is the legitimacy for the collective. The philosophy of human rights founded on ultra individualism which erodes all collectives right down to individualism needs review.

### Need to recall the Gandhian paradigm

The world, and for that India, should go back to the days when the philosophy of human rights was being formulated by H G Wells. When HG Wells sought Gandhi's opinion on the "Rights of Man " drawn up by him, Gandhi argued for a "Charter of Duties" ' instead. The text of the cable that Gandhi sent to Wells sets out his views regarding rights and duties in no uncertain terms. In his cable response to H G Wells Mahatma Gandhi said:

*"Received your cable. Have carefully read your five articles. You will permit me to say you are on the wrong track. I feel sure that I can draw up a better charter of rights than you have drawn up. But what good will it be? Who will become its guardian? If you mean propaganda or popular education you have begun at the wrong end. I suggest the right way. "Begin with a charter of Duties of Man and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter. I Write from experience. As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights and I soon discovered I had none - not even over my wife. So I began by discovering and performing my duty by my wife, my children, my friends, companions and society. I find today that I have greater rights perhaps than any living man I know. If this is too tall a claim, then I say I do not know anyone who possesses greater rights than I."*

The concept of human rights, which has worked, has not only atomised human societies, but also families which transferred the economic and social responsibilities of non-formal moral institutions of families to formal state and institutions, which has not been a happy experience in the West and elsewhere. It is time that India came out with a bold alternative to the contemporary idea of human rights which places huge responsibility on formal institutions which are already facing decline.

As Western democracies seem to be losing their fervour within, the global institutions powered and influenced by the West in the post World War II world are weakening dangerously which will impact on the emerging post Covid-19 world.

## **XXVI. Weakening West-influenced UN and UN group global institutions**

Global institutions like the UN are already weakening and the UNGA has become merely a debating club without any geopolitical stature or authority to make an impact on issues of significance. Even the UN Security Council [UNSC] too has become ineffective as the post-Cold War balance of power, with the West as the fulcrum, clearly stands disturbed by the emergence of China. While during the Cold War the UNSC was stymied by use of veto power by the superpowers, in the post- Cold War, things changed little. During the Cold War period the USSR used its veto power on 45 percent of occasions, the US 32 percent, the UK 14 percent and France 8 percent. In the post-Cold War period, the US used it on 43 percent of occasions, the Russian Federation 33 percent and China 24 percent. Just an example, with the change in the balance of power of the world in which France and England are in the UNSC and India, which is an emerging global power, is not, and Japan and Germany which are global economic powers, the irrelevance of the UN was already becoming self-evident. The WHO is already under great difficulty with the US suspending its funding for alleged bias towards China. The US and Israel have exited UNESCO, () co-founded by the US, again alleging bias. The UN itself is structured as -- to use an Indian term -- a Panchayat of top global powers where a decision is possible only by agreement among them. Indian panchayats still reach a unanimous decision which the UNSC has not been able to. Unless there is a major reform, the future irrelevance of the UN seems to be inevitable.

The decline is not limited to the UN group, the latest Western Project to run the world, the WTO, too is stressed. Whether the WTO will thrive or fail will also have a great impact on the post Covid-19 world order.

## **XXVII. WTO already under stress becoming even irrelevant**

Long before Covid-19 struck the world, the US Trade Representative stated in his 2017 report to the Congress “The US erred in supporting China’s entry into the WTO...on terms that have proven to be ineffective in securing China’s embrace of an open, market oriented trade system....It is now clear that the WTO rules are not sufficient to constrain China’s market distorting behavior.” The EU Trade Commissioner observed, “There needs to be a thorough and quite radical reform...if nothing happens in the coming years (the WTO) will be more and more weakened and it will become irrelevant.” This demonstrated the underlying tensions between nations which are transparent and a non-transparent China, particularly when it rises and tends to acquire power that challenges

the transparent ones. That the US, which promoted the WTO, has fatigued even before the Covid-19 onset, is evident from its refusal to participate in the appointment of judges for the Dispute Settlement Mechanism [DSM] of the WTO. The DSM, which is celebrated as the crown jewel and heart of the WTO, has been rendered dysfunctional, as it now has only one judge instead of three. That the US had also threatened to block the approval of the budget of the WTO also showed its exasperation about the multilateral organisation.

The US/EU complaint that China has not embraced an open market oriented system and its behaviour is market distorting only stops short of pointing to the underlying, but unstated fact that China, with its Marxian polity, cannot operate in an open market economic system within nor participate in a global market system honestly.

The implicit decision by China to bury its market status case in the WTO, which had held that China is a Non-Market Economy, will probably break the WTO as anti-dumping actions against China will massify. It is highly unlikely that WTO can be reinvented to become an effective mechanism for multilateralism, particularly with the participation of non-transparent single party dictatorships in it. Multilateral treaties like the WTO are likely to weaken through unilateral actions and even disappear into oblivion, though how soon will depend how fast alternatives are in place.

With globalisation weakening and the epitaph of WTO likely to be written over a period, multilateralism may yield space to plurilateral and bilateral trade and economic relations. But dismantling the integrated financial architectures and supply chain will be a painful and highly disturbing process unless calibrated properly.

The West, which has realised its folly of focussing on controlling the financial economy and undermining and ceding the real [production] economy to others, is trying to recover back the lost space in production it has lost through globalisation. While writing the obituary of the WTO, this will push nations into a self-reliance paradigm -- to use the Indian Prime Minister's idiom Atma Nirbhar. It would mean that the global economic order will rest partly at least on policies of protection of national economies and building national production capacities of what it considers as essential items for national markets. This will adversely impact in the medium and long-term, particularly China. This is because China, which has set up factories for the world with less than 40 percent of its production for its own consumption and the rest for the world, is over dependent on globalisation. The individual nations which will increasingly look to go more national and local, and will, therefore, tend to deglobalise, which will have its own consequences on the current economic and political order of the world.

If the global Western projects are stressed and weakening, the very backbone of Western power, the Transatlantic Alliance too is not in good shape, and how it shapes up soon to take on the China challenge, will be an important factor in the post Covid-19 world.

## XXVIII. Response of Transatlantic Alliance to China Challenge

The leadership of the US and the support of the G7 nations, particularly the Transatlantic Alliance between the US and Europe, formed the fulcrum of the post-Cold War world order. On the geopolitical side, Europe, which was shocked by the emergence of Donald Trump in the US four years ago, now has serious questions about American leadership. But after Donald Trump got elected, the Transatlantic Alliance has psychologically weakened considerably because of Trump's "America First" policies and really because of the US levying a tariff on the EU for security considerations and further claiming that national security issues are not justiciable by the WTO. Trump's unilateralism forced French President Emmanuel Macron to even talk last year of a Euro alliance with a defence budget matching its strength and responsibilities for the EU to become independent of the US. These developments seem to be gradually eroding the strength of the Transatlantic Alliance which had ensured the West-led post Cold War global order. But the Covid-19 hit European Project is equally in trouble with no hope of the Schengen borderless travel within the EU being restored fully in the post-Covid-19 European order. If the European Project weakens, then the post-Covid-19 Europe's confusion could get worse,

The Transatlantic Alliance has faced many ups and downs right from the time of the US engagement in the disastrous Vietnam War. Even though Covid-19 has increased divergences between the US and EU on the US attitude towards the WHO, multilateral efforts to contain the virus are a blessing in disguise, and must be seen as an inevitable response in mutual interest. The China challenge is likely to revive and restore the Transatlantic Alliance. The election of the US President this year will have a far reaching impact on the Transatlantic Alliance.

Yet another important factor that will influence the emerging world order is the vital issue of technology which needs a new paradigm of ownership regulation and management in view of the China challenge.

## XXIX. The China challenge and need for a new technology paradigm

More than any single phenomenon, technology and the Internet have forced tectonic changes on consumers, businesses and governments on national and geopolitics the world, enmeshed peoples, tastes, values and morals and impacted on personal, family, social and community life, linking the local to the global, which was unthinkable in human history a quarter of a century ago. That the Technology Revolution is Industrial Revolution 2.0 is actually an understatement, as it is equally and more a social, cultural, political trade and economic revolution. Today, everyone's personal privacy and business life, every business and research organisation's and every state's secret is loaded onto public data space and privately managed, yet not impervious to predators. Private and confidential data has become the single most profitable asset, rather than any real asset. And therefore, data security will become the single biggest challenge for all persons, businesses and states. The Internet has become the storehouse of all technologies, the legal and illegal access to which gives access to data. The question of technology and its ownership, which was just commerce once, is now an issue of life and death.

This most critical issue of the present will be the new and most aggressive battlefield threatened by stealing by businesses, spying by governments, and sabotage by both, to theft and misuse by different players as we look into the future. Over decades technology and innovation have been nurtured and developed in universities laboratories and businesses of the West. But thanks to decades of weak regulation and oversight aided by predatory funding and corruption, critical technologies have been illegally spied away and stolen by China. The recent US action to close down the Boston Consulate of China for technology espionage and theft and the reported FBI investigation into some 1000 complaints of Chinese espionage is a pointer to how technology issues are becoming geo-political issues which can trigger a Cold War again. There is enough empirical evidence to show that China's flagship technology company Huawei was built on such illicit and secret flow of technologies from the West. China has in the past tried to use its proxy power in the UN to move control of the Internet to the UN and exert its influence on it and control it like it is exerting influence on the UN and its institutions by increasing its funding -- playing the role that the US was playing thus far. That China sees the Internet and technology space as a frontier to be conquered, dominated, influenced and misused is no more a secret. Its companies are notorious in collecting consumer data and surveillance. However, the world and particularly democratic nations of the world have been merely helpless complainants and have not responded to this challenge effectively so far. In the post-Covid-19 world order, democracies of the world need to create a new, transparent and accountable paradigm of oversight and control over the future of technology and the Internet. New cooperative models for democracies to work on research and development and development of standards and technologies is required.

It is in this background that the emerging apex level eminence of India is a factor in the new world order post-Covid-19.

### **XXX. India's emerging apex level eminence and its effects**

The post-Covid-19 world will likely see the emergence and rise of India to apex level global eminence. India, which was long seen as a rickety democracy, has already shocked the world with its democracy of diversity demonstrating the capacity to produce stable government -- something which was thought to be impossible given the shape and structure of federal Indian constitution and democratic institutions. With a non-transparent China has proved to be a costly experiment and an emerging challenge to the West, the natural alternative of the Western World is India, which has a size matching with China, and also a military and emerging economic strength next only to China's in the region and in the world. India, which has a long tradition of being a non-conflicting civilisation and is a celebrated soft power, has also become a hard power which the world respects. India's rise in the last two decades since the Pokhran atomic blast which put her on the hard power map has been gradual. Its relative importance has indeed been less as compared to the more aggressive and autocratic China, whose importance since the help it provided to the West to break the Cold War, gave it a lead over India, which the latter has not managed to narrow. The post-Covid-19 world seems to open up the possibility which China got in the 1990s. This may prove a major break for India for emerging at the apex level eminence in geopolitics.

The emergence of India and the resistance of the Western and democratic world to China will alter the dynamics of India-China relations.

### XXXI. China would defocus India from growth and development

Post-Covid-19, the rise of India will be countered by China aided by Pakistan and vice versa to defocus the former from development. The emerging geo-political importance India has gained over a period through its soft and hard power mix, and its techno-economic potential makes India a competitor to replace China for those who are seeking an alternative to it, and thus, it is clearly the target for China. China, in its ambitious project for power and wealth and with a low national consumption, has become over dependent on world markets and globalisation for its growth and survival. In contrast, India's domestic consumption is close to 70 percent. If India begins to produce for the world, it will be at the cost of China, and this is what China is worried about in the post-Covid-19 situation. China is indeed running a huge current account surplus with India, but as a proportion of the total current account surplus that China runs with the world, it is less than one tenth. China can afford to forego the surplus with India if that will help it to prevent the rise of India in a strategic partnership with the West -- which is seeking to decouple from -- as its challenger in the medium term at the regional and global level. How can China prevent the rise of India? China is using a reformulated gunboat diplomatic model, innovating border threat diplomacy to impede the rise of India which it sees as a threat to its empire building at the regional and global level. What Bruno Macaes, a former Secretary of State for European Affairs in Portugal and the author of "Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order" wrote after the border flare up in Ladakh in June is so appropriate that to a substantial part of it is relevant.

*One month before the Doklam standoff, China had gathered about 30 national leaders at its first summit devoted to provide guidance for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a vast project aimed at creating a new Chinese world order. India announced just one day before the event that it would not be participating, explaining that in its current form the BRI will create unsustainable burdens of debt, while one of its segments, the economic corridor linking China and Pakistan, goes through the disputed areas of Gilgit and Baltistan and therefore ignores Indian core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity. The decision was received with foreboding in Beijing. In my view, Doklam was a direct response to the Indian move against the BRI.*

*Something similar happened this time. In the weeks prior to the first Chinese troop movements in Ladakh, India had attempted to deepen its strategic relationship with the United States and Japan. More ominously, it had openly declared its intention to attract manufacturing away from China, now that the country appeared vulnerable to the coronavirus epidemic and the growing trade tensions with America. On May 19, the Chinese Global Times wrote: "Tensions between China and the US are not an opportunity for India to attract relocating industrial chains, because the South Asian country is not prepared to receive such a manufacturing shift given its poor infrastructure, lack of skilled labour and stringent foreign investment restrictions."*

*It is tempting to link events in the Galwan valley to local considerations. Its proximity to the vital road link to Daulat Beg Oldie is no doubt important, but Beijing does not make decisions of this importance in abstraction from more*

*general goals. China continues to see India as a major obstacle to its global plans. If anything, the consequences of the original Indian decision to oppose the BRI continue to reverberate. Other countries have followed Delhi and opposition to the initiative grew very considerably in the years after Doklam. An ambitious and successful India, capable of directly rivalling Chinese economic power, would constitute a death knell for the project.*

*The strategy is to create a war psychology. If China wants to stop India from taking certain decisions contrary to Chinese interests, it can achieve this by raising the risk of kinetic conflict. If Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his inner circle come to believe that war can follow upon their decisions, they will be increasingly reluctant to act and/or even become paralysed. In large measure, this is a subtle and repetitive exercise in psychological conditioning.”*

Bruno Macaes seems to be closest to the truth. The easiest way China can keep India de-focussed from the development agenda for which peace is needed is to keep its border hot, so that India will always be conditioned by a threat from two-front war, with Pakistan ever willing to be a partner of China to keep India under pressure. China will always try to keep the mind of India occupied around its security more than development that will enable India to challenge China. China will also work to ensure that the neighbours of India are either hostile or neutral to India. It will try and humiliate India through small nations like Nepal which will psychologically dampen the neighbourhood support for India. China, in a sense, seems to suffer from a kind of complex in relation to India and lacks the skill and wisdom to deal with India as an equal partner. It seems keen to project itself, and be accepted as dominant and superior, which is clearly an outdated Cold War geopolitical model which will not be appropriate for the contemporary and emerging global order for harmony. Consequently, in the medium and long run, China with its empire building instincts intact, will tend to regard India as a threat to its regional and global ambitions.

The post Covid-19 world order will most likely see a reversal of the one size fit all global social, political and economic models that the West has been thrusting on the rest of the world in the post-World War II and more after the Cold War.

## **XXXII. Development: “One-Size Fit All” paradigm to cultural paradigm**

Another significant fall out of the post-Covid-19 world is the likely shift from the West-centric “one size fit all” model of economic development to nationally compatible models. The post-World War II global economic thinking was based on “one size fit all” development approach. This idea was based on the Western Anthropology of Modernity which was incorporated in the then powerful United Nations 1951 as an advisory if not a mandate for development of underdeveloped nations. The UN had commended that a nation desirous of development would have necessarily give up its ancient philosophy and bonds of caste and creed, and if could not, its aspiration for a comfortable life would remain frustrated. After the Cold War, this approach even extended to generate a utopian vision of a world accepting the Western world view to live without conflicts and that became the founding philosophy of economic globalisation and global institutions. The exclusive west-centric economic approach founded on a pure market- centric approach and based on a world free of conflicts, received a civilisational shock though the 9/11 attack. Almost immediately, in 2005, the firmly established idea

of “One Size Fit All model” for the entire world and humanity came to be reviewed by global institutions -- particularly touching upon economic and human development issues. In October 2005, G20 nations recognised *“there is no uniform development approach that fits all countries”* and *“each country should be able to choose the development approaches and policies that suit its specific characteristics while benefiting from the accumulated experiences in policy making over decades.”* Later, in May 2008, just ahead of the global meltdown, the World Bank, on review of its own experiences, said: *“In our work across the World, the World Bank has learned the hard way that there is no one model that fits all. Development is all about transformation. It means taking the best ideas, testing them in new situations, and throwing away what does not work.”* Subsequently, the United Nations, which in 1951 had commended to the underdeveloped nations in the garb of one size fit all economic model and a one size fit all cultural and civilisational model, reviewed its position drastically in 2010 and again in 2013 *“Development must be nationally-driven, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro stressed today, rejecting the “One Size Fit All” approach to eradicate poverty and foster economic growth”*. Even though these declarations were made from time to time, there was no practical shape given to nationally driven models of development. Before any work could be done on nationally driven development models, came the 2008 crisis, which even more seriously questioned the economic theories of the West, and particularly, the Anglo-Saxon economic theories. With multilateralism weakening, the one size fit all models, which rested on it, will also undergo an expedited change towards a national and cultural paradigm. The VIF, which is engaged in the big task of a civilisational perspective for India has to take serious note of this huge and welcome shift in its future strategic studies.

It is against this background that India has to prepare for the post-Covid-19 internal and external challenges -- contain and eliminate Covid-19, handle the border threat from China, work out a Covid relief and stimulus and address economic growth.

### XXXIII. Covid-19 and post Covid Internal and external challenges of India

The challenges that India faces in the Covid-19 onset period, which is still on and even deepening, and in the post Covid-19 period, are multifarious, multi-dimensional and extraneous in the form of security threats from China and Pakistan, individually and together. As we look at the challenges, fortunately the most positive tool to face and manage the Covid-19 and the post-Covid-19 national and global challenges, are a strong single party government under a strong leader who is globally respected. This was in place at the time when the virus hit India and it is even more fortunate that it has a further four year tenure till 2024. It would have been a disaster had the Covid-19 phenomenon occurred last year, or if Indian elections were to be held this year like the American presidential election which is taking place amid raging fury of Covid-19. Here are some of the immediate and inevitable challenges which India has to face and handle, which is not exhaustive, but merely illustrative.

#### 1. Containing and eliminating Covid-19

The foremost challenge for the central and state governments in India is to contain and stamp out the Covid-19 spread expeditiously so that the nation can move on from Covid crisis management to handle

the post Covid-19 challenges and the reconstruction of the economy. This will call for a concerted effort by the state and central governments with the active support of the social capital of India -- the 2.5 lakh village panchayats and communities.

## **2. China's border threat diplomacy**

Even as the Covid-19 crisis is persisting, China has launched border threat diplomacy against India -- like the gun-boat diplomacy of 19th century against Japan -- to distract India away from development and growth and condition its mind psychologically to focus on the borders and work more to prevent escalation into war at one end and to prepare to wage a war at the other end. This conditioning will also deepen, because from India's perspective, China can force India to face a dangerous two-front war with both China and its closest ally Pakistan. That Pakistan is itching for revenge because of its defeat on the Kashmir issue, which has been the soul of its anti-Indian nationalism. The resoluteness with which India has handled China's bullying tactics is a clear reversal of the 1962 psychology which has always weighed on its mind when dealing with China. An actual war between two nations is followed by a psychological war. In the psychological war which is on between India and China, India has matched the Chinese threat. The Prime Minister's visit to Ladakh and his comprehensive message is sufficient proof of India standing up to China like it never has been prior to this government and before Doklam.

But just India entered into a defence treaty with Russia ahead of the war with Pakistan, which ensured that the US did not intervene in the conflict that eventually led to the creation of Bangladesh, this time around India should work out appropriate military and economic alliances with the G7 nations which have equal concerns about the threat from China. This will be a natural alliance of democracies. India should forget the non-alignment kind of geopolitics and go for strategic trade and defence alliances to resist China and its proxy Pakistan.

## **3. Covid-19 crisis Relief, stimulus and financing in India**

The Covid-19 crisis is an ongoing issue. Unless the Covid-19 war is won, the relief and stimulus will remain a continuing affair. The last word on relief and stimulus will come only when the Covid-19 crisis is over. Therefore, any comparison of Covid-19 relief and stimulus by different countries, will not lead to correct conclusions. Be that as may, a comparison between the Covid-19 relief and stimulus in India and in the world shows that on the face of it many western nations have announced bigger fiscal stimuli than India. But a deeper and closer look at the extent of comparative stimulus in India and the advanced nations would show that the comparison is inappropriate and even wrong. All governments, including Germany, are in deficit. That means any government has to borrow and spend. The US has \$22 trillion in banks assets and \$38 trillion in stock market capitalisation, the EU has \$48 trillion in banks assets and \$16 trillion in stock market capitalisation and Japan has \$18 trillion in bank assets and a stock market capitalisation of \$6 trillion. Yet none of them accessed a single dollar from either banks or stock markets, but announced fiscal stimuli without a dollar in their pockets. How? They funded the Covid-19 crisis by

just borrowing from and issuing bonds to their central banks, which means just printing money. They wanted the whole world to refrain from doing so but have themselves violated their own rule time and again since 2008. But India has not done that. It has borrowed from the state-owned banks and funded revival from public sector banks funds. It is appropriate to mention here that the rating agencies include the unprovided non-performing assets of public sector banks in their sovereign rating of India, which means that the public sector bank risks are borne by the fiscal authority, namely the government. If that is factored in, then two-thirds of India's relief and stimulus is fiscal. In contrast the entire G7 stimulus is by printing money, which in economic terms is called as monetising deficit. While the Reserve Bank of India has not ruled out monetisation of deficit in the future for Covid-19 relief, so far the government has been very prudent, perhaps keeping the powder dry for the still continuing Covid-19 crisis.

#### **4. Economic Revival and growth:**

The pre-Covid economic downturn induced by global factors as well as by domestic situations has been accentuated by the huge adverse and ongoing impact of Covid-19. The growth for the current year 2020-21 is bound to be negative with the total and partial suspension of economic activities for months. But rural India, largely free of the Covid-19 crisis, seems to be doing well. The reported 27 percent rise in pre-monsoon sowing of Kharif crops as compared to the previous year is a healthy sign that agriculture may drive the growth of India in 2020-21. A recent report [July 1, 2020] by the Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy [CMIE] has indicated that rural employment has risen back to pre-Covid levels. On a broad view, economic growth in the coming months in India will be partly driven by internal impulses and partly by favourable external factors.

Even though internal security issues in India have an external dimension, in the last few years there has been considerable improvement in internal security.

### **XXXIV. India's internal security issues**

There has been perceptible reduction in terror incidents in India since 2014. According to the South Asian Terrorism Portal, the number of incidents have come down from 2163 in 2014 to 490 in 2019, civilians killed from 1910 to 566, security personnel killed from 680 to 275 and terrorists killed from 3756 to 441. There has been no major Islamist terror incident outside of Jammu and Kashmir. Left extremism is still active but the incidents as well as killings have shown reduction.

National security issues in India are mixed up with external security because of the hangover of the partition of India, the creation of Pakistan, which measures its nationalism by its hatred for India and the unfortunate wrong handling of the Kashmir issue while framing the Constitution of India, which gave unwarranted special status to the border state of Kashmir. Reports indicate with the decline in terror incidents and in the recruitment for terror, and the elimination of important terror leaders, the stage is now set for the government to consider conferring statehood for Jammu and Kashmir and hold elections to complete its Mission Kashmir.

The internal security issues in India are increasingly getting mixed with politics, which is in itself a serious risk for national security. The political transformation which is taking place in India from the late 1980s is to infuse a more intense idea of India in public discourse, which is redefining the concept of secularism practised earlier, which had become virtually competitive vote-bank politics. The degeneration of constitutional secularism into vote-bank politics is one of the biggest risks of internal security. This has tended to bring about divisions within the society and polity on every issue as the nation witnessed last year -- whether it was the Triple Talaq law, Article 370, Citizenship Amendment law, or even an issue like the Ramjanmabhoomi, which was the subject of a judicial verdict.

The nation needs a robust and honest debate on the limits to politicisation of national interest and national security issues as breaching the limits divides both the polity and society. This cannot be merely the subject of political discussions or discourse. It calls for wider participation by the entire polity, consisting of political parties, the judiciary, executive, society, media, social and spiritual leaders. The government should activate interactions like the National Integration Council and expand its scope to discuss and bring about a national consensus on this critical issue.

With the global order which made the world overly inter-dependent and under stress with great questions hanging over it, it is time for India -- which is 1/6<sup>th</sup> of humanity, to think of being more self dependent and less dependent on the world in its own interest because of its sheer size and in the interest of the world.

## XXXV. Time for AtmaNirbhar Bharat -- Self Reliant India

Almost anticipating the stated and unstated global signals, and as a futuristic Indian response to the Covid and post-Covid global developments and challenges, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expounded the idea of AtmaNirbhar Bharat -- Self Reliant India. He has been emphasising on this agenda repeatedly for the nation to internalise and work on. This does not appear to be a short term idea or a knee-jerk reaction. He seems to have been preparing the nation for it since he assumed office in 2014. Even though he chose to unveil this agenda before the nation and the world only now, when his government decided to abolish the Planning Commission and institute a think tank in its place in 2015, he had laid the seeds for an AtmaNirbhar Bharat in the cabinet resolution which instituted the NITI Aayog. The NITI Aayog's overarching philosophy was set out in the Union Cabinet resolution dated 2.1.2015, which went on to emphasise how external transplants cannot work in India and directed the NITI Aayog to focus on Self Reliance. It said: *"Perhaps most importantly, the institution must adhere to the tenet that while incorporating positive influences from the World, no single model can be transplanted from outside into the Indian scenario. We need to find our own strategy for growth. The new institution has to zero in on what will work in and for India. It will be a Bharatiya approach to development.* The idea of AtmaNirbhar Bharat expounded in the NITI Aayog resolution was not an exclusive autarkic. The resolution calls for effective participation in the global commons. On the influence of the world on the comity of nations and on Bharat, the NITI Aayog resolution said: *As India 'contributes' to global endeavours, it is also influenced by happenings far removed from our borders. Global economics and geo-politics are getting increasingly integrated.... India needs to be an active player in the debates and deliberations on the global commons, especially in relatively*

*uncharted areas”.*

The critical word is “to contribute” -- which means a contributing India. For a nation of India’s size and importance, self-reliance is inevitable and India being self-reliant is the best way it can first make its effective contribution to the world commons. If India does not do it, how it would be not a contributor, but a consumer can be easily explained taking just one instance. India with a huge population, which was one sixth of the world’s and with over 11 percent of the globe’s cultivable land, was importing food in the 1960s. That India was a consumer [of food] from the world and not a contributor [of food] to the world. Now India is not only self reliant in food, but also adds to the granary of the world. AtmaNirbhar is not to remain independent or exclusive from the world, but to contribute to the world and not just remain a consumer. An India dependent on the world will be a consumer, not a contributor. Moreover, an AtmaNirbhar Bharat is founded on the national effort as the core and the global input as the additive, and not the other way round, i.e. the world input as the core and the national effort as the additive. Globalisation was wrongly understood and emphasised to mean that development will happen by the very force of global market activated by mere liberal laws and policy prescriptions by a municipal government to facilitate global trade and FDI. Fortunately this wrong perception of globalisation is being righted by the intervention of Covid-19.

A nation like India, which has 17.5 percent of the world’s population, has to be self-reliant on core human and national demands first to make its effective contribution to the world. If India were one hundredth of its size, like Singapore or Hong Kong, it need not be self reliant on core demands of people. It can rely on the world and other countries and move on. An India of the size that it is, if it is reliant on the world for its core human and national demands, will be a liability to the world. It has to be self reliant to be an effective contributor to the world. India has to follow the Nation First rule even to participate in the world as that itself means taking care of one-sixth of the world population. But till the advent of Trump in the US, any talk of nation first was itself considered blasphemous in the field of economics and the very idea of self-reliance was considered as an anachronism in the world that was dreamt of becoming a global village. But swimming against the current, some eminent economic thinkers like Norwegian economist Eric Reniert had been contesting the idea of globalisation centred on the supremacy of finance and financial instruments and arguing for industrial growth, manufacturing as more critical for development and jobs -- in short for sustainable development. AtmaNirbhar Bharat, which is the sustainable development alternative to globalisation, is also the inevitable model as anyway with globalisation becoming weak and even irrelevant.

For affecting such significant changes as India needs, including climbing on to the paradigm of Atmanirbhar Bharat, there has to be a substantial degree of national consensus than seen at present in the national polity.

## **XXXVI. Need to build national consensus in Indian polity**

It is also time efforts are made to strengthen the national polity and for that purpose build national consensus on important issues like electoral reforms, including funding of elections, internal democracy and elections in political parties, relations between political parties inside and outside parliament, orderly conduct

of parliament, relations between the judiciary and the executive, judicial appointments, probity in public life and in the federal polity and on issues. But the debate should centre on India and the tendency to look for borrowed ideas and solutions from outside India which will not suit Indian conditions should be avoided even though the best practices from all over the world may be of guidance. The VIF should promote discussions and programmes aimed at building a national consensus.

The future world will need a higher degree of moral values than it has been able to demonstrate post-World War II and more so after the Cold War. India, which has been for millennia a nation which has run on moral order and for which it was respected in the world, has somewhere weakened in its moral underpinnings. It has to address this as the world would need a morally resurgent India which needs to build institutional moral authority.

### **XXXVII. Need for national introspection and debate to re-build institutional moral authority**

Nations are built on moral character. The freedom movement was led by men of high moral character who had no desire for power or office. No nation had such illustrious moral leadership in the 20th century. But how is it that India as a nation lost its moral foundation first in politics and how it quickly spread to all areas of the polity, including the executive, judiciary, media and, of course, business? This question calls for national introspection dispassionately to analyse where we erred as a society and a polity to lose the connect with the moral underpinning that formed the foundation of the freedom movement. A brief recall of how moral values in public life was compromised first for political success, and deliberately undermined for acquiring absolute power and how it ended up destroying the moral fibre of national polity is necessary for any effort to rebuild moral values in a polity. This recall is necessary because the present generation of Indians are unaware of how moral values collapsed in the polity from the late 1960s. The Indian polity which had inherited high values from the freedom movement suddenly lost its high sense c

The national polity had broad moral underpinning till mid-late 1960s when the monolithic Congress party that inherited not only goodwill, but also the values of the freedom movement, had remained united. With the split in the ruling party, engineered by the ruling regime using state power against dissenters within the ruling party, unfortunately it was the Prime Minister, whose responsibility it was to uphold moral values, who herself, in total breach of political morals and by blatant use of state power, personally worked to defeat and actually defeated the presidential candidate her party had proposed, and she had endorsed. She had signed the party candidate's nomination and defeated him, dealing a body blow to political morality and claimed the victory of the opposition as her victory to show her own party for what it was -- a rump -- without power and her. At one stroke, power and success became the political norm. The collateral result was that the large spectrum of national and regional leadership which represented the party's federal organisational pyramid was destroyed at one stroke and a host of ruling party leaders who constituted the party's natural succession model were driven into political oblivion. The president so elected by breach of promise was used to undermine the institution of the presidency till then occupied by illustrious men of high public character. This open repudiation of public

and political morality by the highest political authority led to further and irreversible decline in democratic and moral values and gradual acceptance of such decline as part of politics.

The idea of inner party democracy disappeared with the split in the Congress, leading to coterie politics, which gradually and finally yielded itself to dynastic politics. It was then that the practice of branding those who dissented began as part of political discourse. The ruling regime began innovating concepts of committed bureaucracy and committed judiciary, and in the process undermined the independence of both. The discourse ended with the ruling regime destroying the independence of the judiciary by superseding judges and delegitimising the judiciary itself. All this led to the acquisition of absolute power by the ruling regime and, as the ruling party's organisational structure weakened and inner party democracy became extinct, absolute power came to be concentrated in the hands of a few. This soon led to extra-constitutional authorities exercising constitutional powers and sequenced corruption on a scale unheard of till then and a loss of legitimacy and credibility of the national and regional leadership. This was how moral values became irrelevant and success became the touchstone in politics, the bureaucracy and the judiciary, and generally in the polity. Political decline infected businesses where once values were respected and this led to a celebration of buccaneers who succeeded by testing the limits of law. When all this was resisted in the mid-1970s by a mass movement of opposition led by Jayaprakash Narayan, the ruling regime, threatened with loss of power by an adverse judicial verdict for corrupt practices and a national revolt, imposed the emergency, clamped dictatorship and arrested all national leaders opposed to the coterie, subordinated the judiciary and virtually brought constitutional democracy to extinction.

In a bid to acquire electoral legitimacy for the dictatorship, the ruling regime ambitiously ordered elections which it thought it would win given the bizarre state of the opposition and ruling party. But the people of India threw out the ruling regime and the dictatorship in the most shocking manner in the history of democracy. The quick fix Janata Party formed by the opposition parties combining, which won the elections, collapsed in under three years, paving the way for the return of the very perpetrators of the emergency back to power. This proved that morals are a burden and basis for politics and the polity. The trend has been irreversible since then. Except in patches, there has been no effort or possibility in a competitive politics based on lower and lower values. The collapse of values is also reflected in the fractured politics and bizarre coalitions that lasted almost three decades.

Recalling this sordid story of how the Indian polity was bereft of morals that infected and affected all institutions, is a condition precedent for responsible political parties, leaders and intellectuals to dispassionately introspect on how to recover moral values and the foundation of institutions of polity. Fortunately, the people of India have given a stable government since 2014 and re-elected the present government again in 2019. Despite the multiple problems it is facing and the unfair criticism it is subjected to, this government has a fairly clean image and a record of success on diverse fronts. It is seen to be uncompromising on national interest issues. It has leadership which has global acclaim. This government, which has the potential to course correct the

derailed polity, owes a duty to the nation to reverse the destructive moral degeneration which has haunted our polity and people for almost four decades.

Nationalist institutions like the VIF should endeavour to promote discussions and debates and involve important intellectuals and nationalist thinkers to create an ecosystem which will enable the basis for moral regeneration in the country.

And here comes finally the most critical role of the VIF. The VIF has to work on national and global civilisational issues to conceptualise a non- conflicting civilisational order which draws more from the spiritual aspects of human life and less from the pure material urges of human beings to build a world order founded on a collective of humans rather than a collection of humans.

### **XXXVIII. The World needs a non-conflicting civilisational paradigm as an alternative to the pure materialist ideologies which seem to have played themselves out -- and the VIF role in shaping it**

Covid-19 seems to have physically and mentally stunned a world moving at supersonic speed and stopped it and forced into introspecting and realising whether the social, political and economic trends and lifestyles that was becoming universal in the last century and more in the last quarter of it through the blinding idea of globalisation, is sustainable in the future. Of the two powerful and competing pure materialist ideologies, one was perceived to have failed at the end of the Cold War and the other, whose validity came to be questioned in 2008, seems to be failing miserably as its foundations appear to be not durable enough to handle a crisis that has reached beyond pure material economics. Pure materialism founded on individualism appears to have reached a dead end. Both materialist ideologies have failed. The intellectual world has repeatedly spoken of the end of ideologies. So long as secular thought systems claim to be the repositories of truth and declare others as false, which is true of both Karl Marx and Adam Smith, there will not be an end to the ideological paradigm. The world needs an alternative philosophic model as distinct from ideological models. Philosophy includes dialogue and ideology rules it out. Both Marx and Market ideologies were founded on the view that they were infallible and all other views fallible and false. That is why both of them rule out dialogue that will question their infallibility. One could at best argue within the allowed limits of their belief that they were only right and perfect, but not questioning that belief. In a sense, both Market and Marx ideologies are like religions which will consider any questioning their belief as blasphemous. Both are homogenising in effect.

Increasingly, the political order of different nations, particularly democracies and even more importantly liberal democracies, is now becoming more fragile. Western liberal democratic societies are not able to produce stable governments. Most governments are formed by compromises and cobbling together post-coalition alliances. Domestic political perspectives and domestic geopolitical perspectives are ever shorter. A domestic political regime's perspectives in a democracy, is limited to the electoral term of the government or the leader. Elections in most democracies are yielding such split outcomes that government formation through a post-poll

coalition becomes difficult. For example, the delay in such a mature democracy like Germany took as many as six months to thrash out an alliance to make a government. Therefore, politicians whose ideas and goals are circumscribed by the limits of the term of their office and who operate and succeed or fail in a particular context, are not best qualified to think of durable solutions for the problems of humanity. A national and global order founded on greater durability than mere political institutions is needed.

Again, the shelf value of thoughts propounded and expounded by geo-political forces in the last few centuries are declining in their useful validity period. For example, Colonialism ruled for 200 years. Its successor, Capitalism, ruled for 100 years. Its counterpart, Communism, lasted for 50 years. Finally, globalisation, which capitalism and communism yielded, lasted for just 25 years.

The ever declining shelf value of successive ideas shows that the founding ideas of these institutions have short duration validity, even though their contextual power is so high that each one of them looked like ruling the world forever.

The world needs a philosophy that transcends the power of the context for ideas to increase their useful shelf life. The West is obviously running out of long term ideas and is arrested by a shorter and shorter span of attention. Here is a business economic example commonly known to investors in corporate stocks 25 years back, investors were once looking at annual results and in the years before to make or keep their investments. Then they began to look at half yearly results to keep or sell their stocks, and then quarterly results to decide whether to keep or sell, and now, overnight, interest rates decide buying and selling. After quarterly results and overnight interest became the deciding norms, there are very few investors who would bank on a company on a long-term basis. The world, which was working on long-term interest several years back, is now working on short term interest and interest arbitrage between one overnight regime and another. Just as this has destabilised the investment business and robbed it of durability, the world desperately needs a durable long-term view transcending short term considerations. Political leaders given to short-term electoral and governance issues are not trained to think long-term. We need to involve civilisational experts, historians and other segments of the society in a dialogue to shape the emerging global order. Here is where the VIF has a different and unique approach.

The post Covid-19 world needs a civilisational philosophy which will recognise the diversity of the world and seek harmony amid diversity. This is the biggest challenge before world thinkers. The Western world, solely led by the power of religion first, politics next and pure materialism later, has only produced wars and conflicts. To get away from the ill effect of its tradition of conflicts, the Western world has embraced individualism and liberalism which atomised societies and even families. What the world needs today is not just a civilisation paradigm, but a non-conflicting civilisational paradigm which transcends the pure materialist view of life. Civilisational paradigms which foster diversity of non-formal normative orders around the world, transcend the limits of the durability of the political order.

With this background in view and transcending the contemporary trends in intellectual and strategic thinking, the VIF has made some significant progress in this regard through the Samvad initiative, which is founded on

ancient Indian philosophy of conflict avoidance based on dialogue. Time is ripe for the VIF to deepen its work in this area and interact with other think tanks. The times ahead are not only interesting, they are risky and challenging. With the increasing relevance and importance of India in geopolitics and geo-economics, the VIF, which is the most prominent of India centric think tanks that is independent of the influences which many think tanks are risked into, will have a significant role to play in shaping and developing the alternative paradigm which the world desperately needs.

As I end I appeal to Team VIF to launch into understanding, unravelling and expounding that what the most challenging year has unveiled thus far and has not as yet and the period ahead thereafter in human history.

August 2020



**S. Gurumurthy**  
**Chairman, VIF**



Vivekananda  
International  
Foundation

  
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 Board and an Executive Committee

comprising of distinguished persons from diverse fields with high professional accomplishments and long experience.

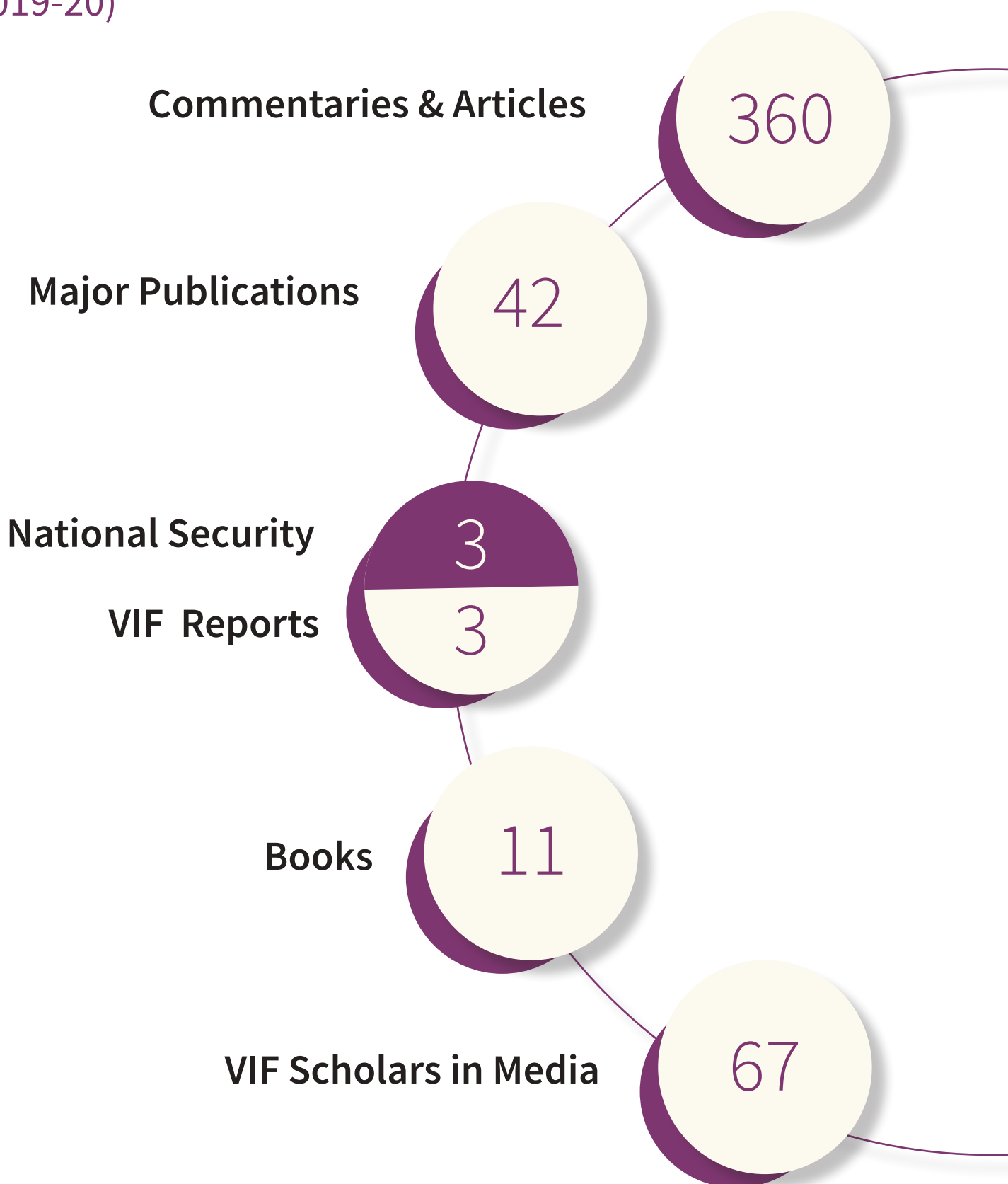
The Director is the Chief Executive of the Foundation and is nominated by the Trust.

## 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.

# Year Outcomes

(2019-20)



84

**Major Events**

31

**Major Foreign Interactions**

792.4K

**Views & Downloads  
on website**

504.4K

**Visitors on website**

53.6  
Million

**Impressions on Twitter**

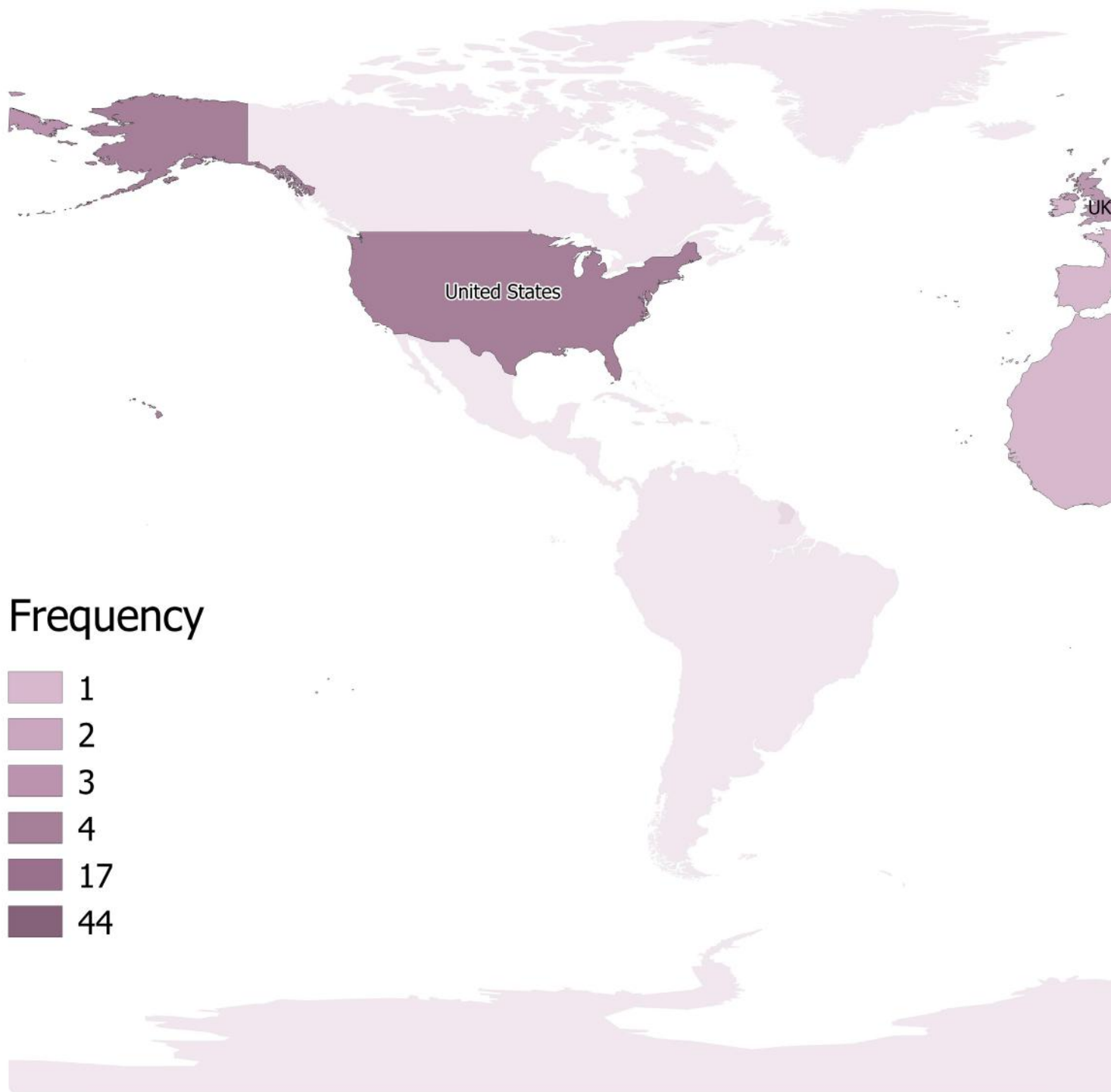
12.2  
Million

**Impressions on Facebook**

93,000

**Hours watched on VIF's YouTube Channel**

# Maps of Events Conducted:

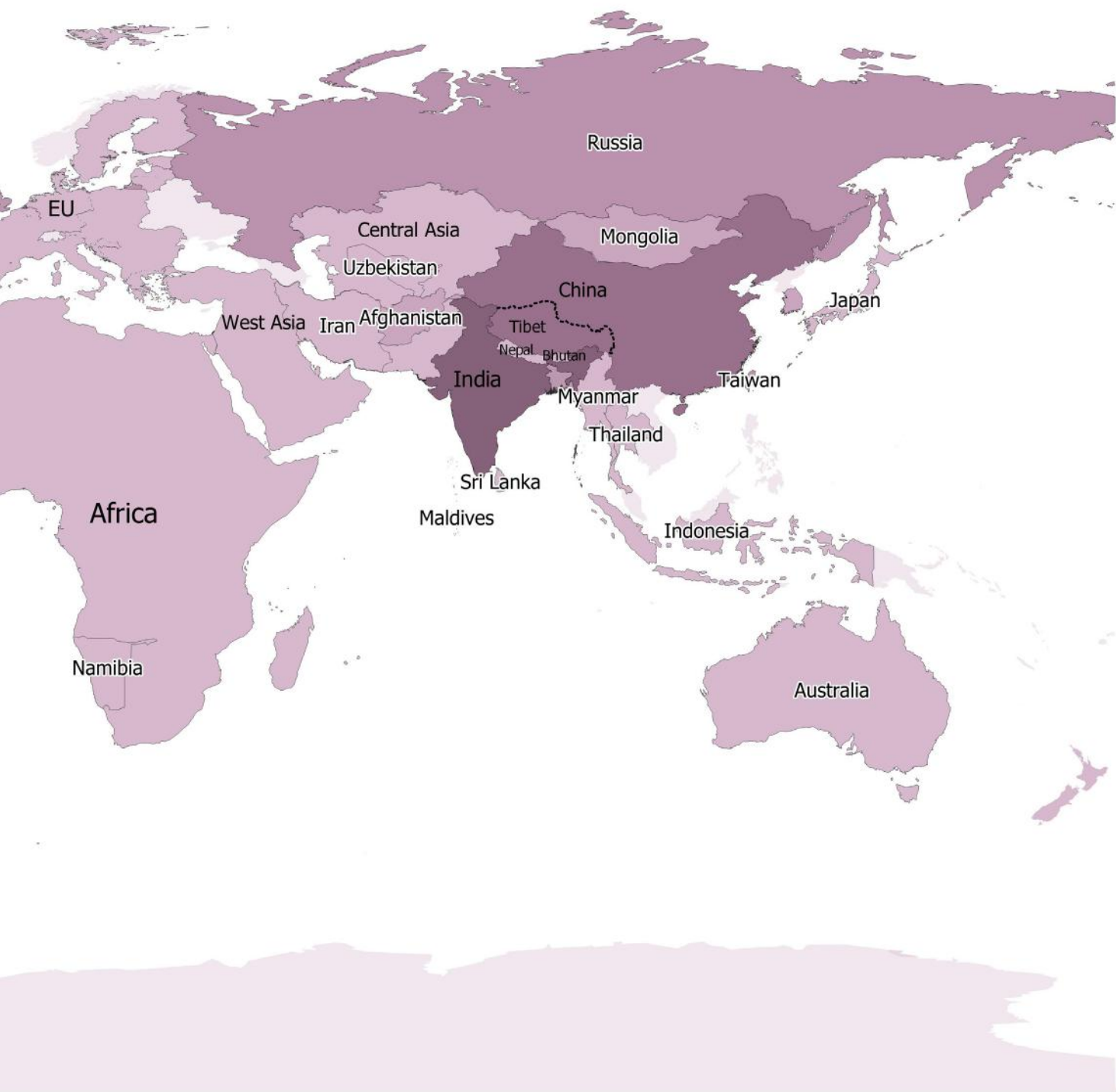


Map is for thematic representation only, it does not represent any legal survey.

Map by : Jyothy Nair

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# Country based Frequency



If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished.

**- Swami Vivekananda**

# Director's Preface

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) completed ten years of its existence this year. In this short period, the VIF has been able to make a distinctive mark in the growing Indian strategic community by contributing original ideas on issues of national importance. This has been possible because of the dedication and selfless work of scholars, experts, and others who are associated with the think tank.



The VIF was set up to develop a distinct Indian paradigm in strategic thinking. The Western political and economic model of development does not quite suit India. An Indian model of development is required. The VIF has made an effort to dip into Indian civilisational and cultural heritage for ideas that can be relevant today. Indian thinkers had recognised the strength and influence of Indian thought across the world. The situation changed for the worse with colonisation. Indians were enslaved by the west and the western mode of thinking. This must change. Indian thinking must be based on Indian civilisational and cultural values and India's context.

The Chairman wrote a detailed article in the VIF Annual Report of 2018-19 in which he recounted that the objective of setting up the VIF was to initiate a shift in the national and global discourse on strategic and geopolitical thinking. This is what we tried to do, although it must be admitted that original thinking is not an easy task. It requires a lot of self-belief. Ancient thinking is discounted in favour of more fashionable post-modern ideas.

## Strategic landscape

The global strategic landscape changed dramatically and unexpectedly due to the spread of novel coronavirus infectious disease, COVID-19, which engulfed the entire world and

claimed several hundred thousand lives. A major part of the global economy was shut down. The coronavirus pandemic was indeed the defining moment of the year 2019-20.

No less significant was the transformation of the domestic political landscape after the general elections in April-May 2019. BJP won an unprecedented majority in the 2019 general elections. It won 303 seats on its own, which was not expected even by its die-hard supporters. Prime Minister Modi promised to build a New India based on the principles of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas and set a target of making India a \$ 5 trillion economy by 2024.

Buoyed by its performance in the elections, a confident government moved quickly and took some momentous decisions which will shape the New India. One was to nullify Article 370 of the Constitution, which was a temporary provision. No government had attempted this before. The move was aimed at bringing J&K into the mainstream. The reorganisation of J & K had a major impact on the political situation in the country but it also attracted adverse attention in Pakistan and international media.

On the government's initiative, the Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which sought to provide persecuted minorities who had fled to India from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan a fast track to Indian citizenship. The issue was quickly politicised. Unexpected consequences followed. Anti-CAA protests broke out in the country. The run-up to the Delhi elections in February 2020 saw the exchange of strong rhetoric which led to communal polarisation. Communal riots broke out in north-east Delhi.

Undoubtedly, the most important development of the year was the outbreak of the coronavirus infectious disease, COVID-19, which took the shape of a global pandemic. India was also hit badly. Alert to the possible spread of the virus to India, the government took several corrective measures during January, February and March to prepare the country for the onslaught of the infection. A wide range of restrictions was put on the passengers coming from outside to India. Eventually, the Prime Minister decided to put the entire country in a strict lockdown on 24th March. The lockdown was extended several times. The entire machinery of the central government and the state governments was mobilised to fight the crisis. As a result of these timely measures, the impact on India was much less as compared to that in the US and European countries where lakhs of people died. Despite the comparatively low mortality rate, India also faced a serious impact of the virus. While India was able to flatten the curve of the positive cases faster than other countries, the livelihood issues became urgent as a significant part of the economy was impacted. The government came up with relief measures amounting to ₹ 1.7 lakh crores aimed at the most vulnerable sections. However, it will be a while before full economic recovery takes place.

The spread of COVID-19 was a black swan event whose impact will be felt for a long time. Country after country put their populations under unprecedented lock-downs. As unprecedented strict restrictions were imposed on the movement of the people worldwide, sector after sector of the global economy began to shut down. The global economy went into a recession. The cause and the cure of the virus were not known. Several thousand people died, and hundreds of millions were confined to their homes. Stock markets went through

an unprecedented meltdown. Oil prices plummeted. Civil aviation, tourism, entertainment and sports sectors were affected by the coronavirus. The leading economies of the world slowed down. The world was not prepared to deal with the challenge of such magnitude. The virus exposed the limits of globalisation. It has triggered multiple crises in a hyper-connected world. COVID-19 is just a trailer to what can happen if the adverse impact of climate change unfolds in full fury. China came under tremendous international pressure for its inept handling of the outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan. The US and China were locked in mutual recriminations about the origin and spread of the virus. The international community was found wanting in fashioning a coordinated response for dealing with the virus. Multilateralism was ineffective in the wake of the virus.

Even without the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was experiencing multiple crises. Trump's America First Policy clearly showed that the US would not hesitate to withdraw from its global commitments unless there was something for them in it. The US-China trade war put massive pressure on the Chinese economy. Round one of US-China trade war ended in favour of the former. COVID-19 impacted Chinese manufacturing adversely. However, the US and Europe did not escape unscathed.

Britain exited from Europe without an agreed plan, impacting the much-touted European unity and solidarity. The two sides started difficult negotiations on a trade agreement whose contours are still not clear. Thanks to the Middle Eastern refugee crisis, Brexit, EU-US disagreements on numerous issues, deepening Chinese inroads into Europe and the COVID-19 nightmare, Europe is in the midst of confusion as it begins to reshape itself. It is in search of a new strategy for a new world. While India has good relations with the leading European countries, those with the EU are at best, indifferent. The Prime Minister postponed his visit to Brussels for the India-EU summit at the height of coronavirus scare. Europe is too distracted by its problems to pay attention to India-EU relations.

The historic US-Taliban agreement, designed to pull out American troops from the beleaguered country, has brought about a qualitative change in the Afghan situation. The Taliban are looking to make a comeback to power. Whether there will be a peaceful political transition after 40 years of the strife, or will a new phase of instability begin remains to be seen. The level of violence in Afghanistan did not come down appreciably after the US-Taliban agreement. Much will depend upon how intra-Afghan dialogue proceeds. There are tensions among Afghan people. In the meanwhile, the US has committed to withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan in 18 months. India will be deeply affected by the developments in Afghanistan.

India's neighbourhood remains a tough region. China has made inroads into India's neighbourhood. India made some gains in its neighbourhood First Policy. Summit level interactions took place between India and all its neighbours, except Pakistan. Relations with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and the Maldives were enriched with new content. Connectivity is the key pillar of the relationship India is building with its neighbours. Prime Minister Modi took an unprecedented initiative to hold a video conference with SAARC leaders to discuss how they can fight COVID-19 jointly in South Asia. Unfortunately, Special Advisor to Prime Minister Imran Khan, who attended the meeting, did not miss the opportunity to raise the Kashmir issue in the video conference. After the Balakot surgical strikes of 2019 and the revocation of Article 370, India - Pakistan

relations have nosedived to the lowest point in recent years. China-Pakistan's multidimensional nexus is a major concern for India. The Sino-Pakistan nexus continued to strengthen during the year. For the first time since 1971, the US Security Council met behind closed doors to discuss the Kashmir issue under the Chinese initiative.

The Western media gave huge attention to domestic developments. Such uninformed and motivated media coverage dented India's image. The economic slowdown in India did not help matters either. India faces the challenge of re-engaging with the world at a time when it faces many crises.

India-US relations are evolving into a comprehensive global strategic partnership. President Trump's visit to India was a landmark in the India-US relations. The spectacular "Namaste Trump" public rally left an indelible mark on the US President. The deepening of Indo-US ties will have an impact on China and the region. The concept of Indo-Pacific and the Quad will be strengthened further. However, US politics is complex and difficult to fathom. India will have to remain sensitive to domestic politics and its fallout for India.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Vladivostok for a summit meeting with President Putin was a balancing move by India to diversify its relations. It was a signal to Russia that India values its decade long friendship and would like to work with it in shaping a new world.

Despite China's unhelpful and even hostile actions, India has sought to maintain good ties with China. Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at Mamallapuram for a 2nd informal summit. This has helped the two countries to keep their relationship on track and address such issues as trade imbalance. Unfortunately, there was no progress on the resolution of the boundary question.

## VIF activities

The VIF organised a host of activities to analyse these developments and their implications for the country. During the year 78 roundtable discussions/seminars and conferences were held to discuss these issues and generate policy recommendations.

## Publications

This was perhaps the most active year for publications. We produced 11 books, 5 monographs, 19 VIF Briefs, 14 VIF papers, 5 Reports, 03 compendium, 01 Task Force report. This level of publication activity was the record for the VIF. The subject matters covered were defence, technology, neighbours, politics, history, culture and governance.

### Books

- Vijay Sakhuja and Somen Banerjee's book Sea of Collective Destiny: Bay of Bengal and BIMSTEC offered several suggestions to strengthen the BIMSTEC.

- Maj Gen PK Chakraborty assessed the Chinese Military's modernisation and its implications for India.
- RNP Singh's Politics of Opportunism described how political parties have become increasingly opportunistic.
- Tilak Devasher's Pakistan Insight put together various commentaries written by VIF Scholars on Pakistan.
- Ashok Pathak's book gave India's strategies for information war and cyber-deterrence.
- Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee compiled selected essays from the vast repository of articles written by the VIF scholars in the last ten years.
- The VIF also published the collection of papers presented at the 2nd Samvad conference on Hindu-Buddhist philosophy held in Myanmar.
- Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee put together a selection of 30 articles on management of national defence and defence preparedness written by VIF scholars.
- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam edited by Dr Arvind Gupta and Arpita Mitra discusses the relevance of Indian ancient thinking to contemporary strategic reality.
- Abhinav Pandya's book on Radicalisation makes a significant contribution to the literature on the subject.

### **Monographs & VIF papers**

- Amb Satish Chandra's monograph on India's relations with its SAARC neighbours recommended tailored and calibrated approaches to different neighbours while strengthening our knowledge base about the country.
- After the new government took power, the VIF brought out a publication on Suggested Policy Initiatives for the New Government in which recommendations for 26 sectors were made.
- A VIF report written by Amb VS Seshadri gave specific recommendations to deal with Priority Issues for India in External Trade.
- Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee's published a substantive VIF paper on the CDS and Defence reforms.
- Given the importance of four major powers, the VIF published a summary of the discussion on Managing India's relations with the four major powers, in which it was recommended that India should build up both economy and military to safely mitigate the growing international uncertainty and trouble in the global economy.
- Dr Kamlesh Bajaj and VIF team published a monograph on 5G technologies to facilitating policymaking in India. A comprehensive survey of 5G technology trend was carried out.

- Maj Gen PK Mallick in his monograph, *Rise of China: History, Technology and Policies*, dwelt upon the implications of China's rise for India. In particular, he focused on China's technological rise.
- Ramanand Garge's monograph gives an Indian perspective on the Jurisprudence of Anti-terrorism laws. He traced the evolution of counterterrorism laws in India and identified the gaps therein.
- Maj Gen PK Mallick in his monograph, *Return of the Hashishin Cult* dwelt upon the implication of the attack on Saudi Oil facility in which he examines at length the wide-ranging implication of this development.
- The VIF also published a compendium of bilateral and multilateral military exercises in 2019.
- National Security Journal (Online) - VIF online quarterly journal National Security has stabilised. Three issues were uploaded during the year on our website. These were devoted to the themes of BIMSTEC, technologies, Indo-Pacific & China. We hope to publish the hard copies of the journal soon.
- News Digests: VIF scholars published a series of regular news digests covering international developments, defence and national security, regional developments in West Asia, India's neighbourhood, Europe et cetera. These news digests were well received.

The VIF continued its outreach to the foreign think tanks. The VIF delegations visited Russia, China, Taiwan, US and Myanmar for interaction with counterpart institutions and hosted delegations from China (09), Taiwan (02), US (1), Australia (1), Uzbekistan (1) and New Zealand (1).

The VIF reached out to several foreign diplomats. For instance, the VIF had a roundtable discussion on Central Asia in which the resident Ambassadors of Central Asian countries participated. A meeting of African Ambassadors was also held last year. We also hosted the Russian and Chinese Ambassadors for lunch at the VIF to discuss bilateral relations. Very useful insights were generated in these well-appreciated interactions. On the recommendations of the embassies, we have hosted several visiting delegations of officials and scholars from Australia, New Zealand, South Korea et cetera for interaction. The VIF also hosted a trilateral meeting with think tanks from Bangladesh and Myanmar. The trilateral setting was devoted to discussing the Rohingya issue.

The VIF website was as active as ever. 360 commentaries and articles were carried out. 136 videos were uploaded.

VIF's outreach to the public continued through the VIMARSH series of lectures. Prominent people were invited to deliver the talks. Nine lectures were organised covering issues such as the DRDO's role in defence indigenisation, New templates for India's National Security Management, Why Triple Talaq should be a punishable offence, Buddhism and the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, Indraprastha: A capital Journey, Politics of opportunism, Swami Vivekananda and National Regeneration, India's Space programme: Achievements and prospects, Political Stability and Transformation of Union Budget .

To strengthen its research on economic issues and explore the Indian socio-economic model, the VIF launched a Centre for Economic Studies during the year. The Centre is headed by Sh S Gurumurthy. Sh Rajiv Chandrashekhar, MP, is the Vice Chairman of the Centre. A public discussion on the Indian economy and the budget was held in which Chairman Sh Gurumurthy gave his views. Sh Rajiv Chandrasekhar also made a presentation on the Indian economy.

VIF scholars maintained substantive outreach with the media and the government. Many meetings were held with Indian media. We have also engaged with foreign media delegations, two from Russia and one from the Maldives.

In recent years the VIF has stepped up its focus on cultural and civilizational issues. Like in the earlier year, the VIF organised a conference on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam to which experts and scholars were invited. The VIF also brought out a book containing the proceedings of the last year's conference on the same theme.

The 3rd conference of Hindu-Buddhist Samvad was held in Ulaanbaatar. Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim scholars took part in this meeting which was organised by the Gandan Monastery of Mongolia in collaboration with the VIF. Ulaanbaatar declaration was issued. PM Modi had sent a video message specially for the occasion while PM Abe had sent a written message.

VIF's social medial outreach showed a healthy increase. Hits for website increased by 18.5 per cent. Twitter followers went up by 17 per cent and Facebook likes by 10 per cent. The website has emerged as a major source of high quality commentaries, videos and databases. Presently the VIF maintains databases on internal security, China, Foreign policy.

## Specific recommendations

### VIF activity generated several useful policy recommendations

- Several suggestions were given to strengthen India's soft power. The emphasis was on Indian heritage as a source for ideas for the new world.
- On behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs, the VIF organised a meeting of think tanks of BIMSTEC countries. This was the 2nd meeting in a row. Several useful policy recommendations were generated and circulated.
- A roundtable on Coronavirus issues was held and detailed suggestions on how the crisis could be turned into opportunities were made and shared with the government. Regular updates, commentaries, and articles on the subject were uploaded on the website. A suggestion was made that a substantial fund should be set up to boost the public health sector and R&D.

- A monograph, introducing the 5G technology and examining its potential for India was written. Ways were suggested how India can strengthen cooperation with the US and Japan to build 5G technologies.
- Seminars on the e-vehicles and steel industry were organised. It was felt that India should go for hybrid vehicles rather than e-vehicles. India should also invest in specialised steels to meet to make the local demand and also produce for exports.
- The VIF published suggestion for the new government. It contained a large number of initiatives in different sectors.
- Several meetings were held to discuss the appointment of the CDS and its future course. Seminars on indigenisation of defence production were held.
- The Ulaanbaatar declaration was issued following the third meeting of Hindu- Buddhist Samvad. The tendency among some faiths to divide the people as faithful and non-believers with attendant 'divine' mandate to convert 'non- believers' into 'believers' was pointed out as one of the principal causes for conflicts.
- The VIF has analysed a strategic decision-making game titled "Indraprastha" based on imaginary but plausible scenarios. The Indraprastha II exercise, which focused on security challenges from China and Pakistan pointed out that India's military capability which is beset with challenges needs to be enhanced. India should pay special attention to Pak-China nexus at sea.
- The VIF organised two courses on strategic thinking for students and foreign diplomats, respectively. An additional module on Indian business ethos was also organised.
- As a part of its outreach to students, the VIF sponsored an essay competition at Amity University. Senior VIF scholars spoke about the relevance of Vivekananda in building of character amongst the youth.
- The VIF shared 24 reports on the various topical subject with the government.
- Volume VIII of VIF's Ancient India Series edited by Prof Dilip Chakrabarti was released. Another book on India's archaeology will be published soon.
- The VIF has set up several task forces to regularly discuss Pakistan, China, Indo-Pacific and the US under the chairmanship of Sh Tilak Devasher, Amb Ashok Kantha, Vice Admiral (R) Anil Chopra and Amb Arun K Singh, respectively. These groups met frequently and generated many useful ideas. These were shared with the government.
- A meeting of 40 vice-chancellors was held to discuss the VIF task force report on STEM education in the country.

- The then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released two VIF Task Force reports – one on India as a cyber power and the second one on Indigenisation and Make in India.

## Future directions

Covid and its aftermath will dominate global and national discourse in the near future. Unveiling the Rs 20 lakh Crore special economic package for a self-reliant India, the Prime Minister has underlined the importance of local manufacturing and globalisation of local brands. India will face the daunting task of economic recovery. In the coming year, much of VIF's attention will be focused on the fundamental changes taking place in the world and how to cope with them.

With rapid changes in the global and domestic environment, the VIF will continue to track and analyse the new developments and generate policy recommendations. Besides, we will strengthen our research on culture, civilisation and heritage to strengthen Indian narrative for the modern world. The newly launched Centre for Economic Studies, which has already generated many suggestions for the government, will also be strengthened. We will focus on multi-disciplinary research to take advantage of the cross-fertilization of ideas.

The country is facing several challenges on the socio-economic front. We will focus on these issues. The efforts to improve the quality of research will be continued. The outreach to influential global think tanks and reputed institutions within the country will be strengthened. We will also strengthen our human resources. Our research on the relevance of Swami Vivekananda's ideas for the contemporary world will be continued.

During the long lockdown phase, VIF's productivity did not come down. The scholars, working from home, contributed to the VIF's website by writing variety of commentaries, articles, papers et cetera. VIF community was quick to adjust to the new modes of videoconferencing, online collaborations et cetera. This trend is likely to continue and we will strengthen our technical capabilities in the coming year.



May 2020  
New Delhi

**Dr Arvind Gupta, IFS (Retd)**  
**Director, VIF**  
(Former Deputy National Security Advisor  
& Former Director General, IDSA)

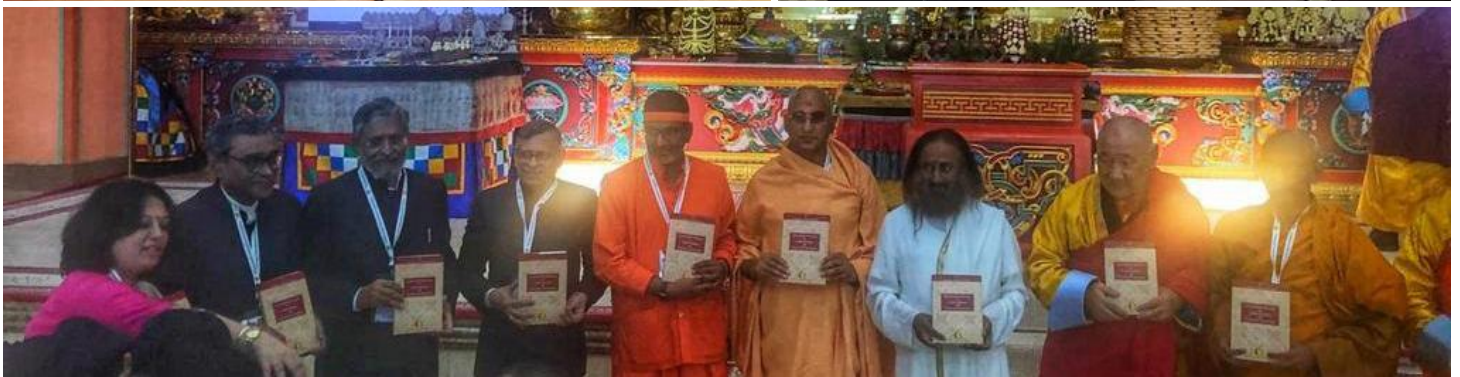
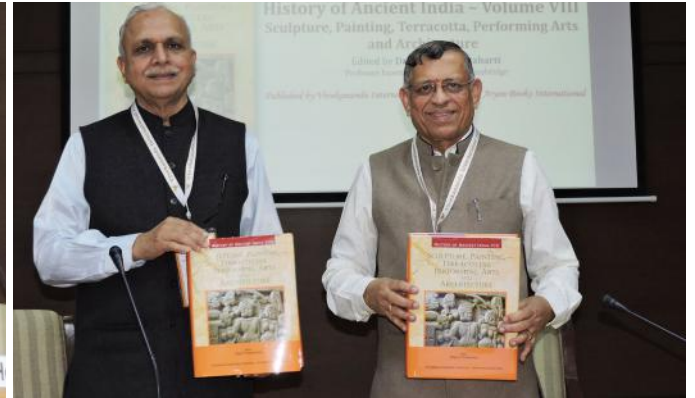
Books are infinite in number and time is short. The  
secret of knowledge is to take what is essential.  
Take that and try to live up to it.

**- Swami Vivekananda**

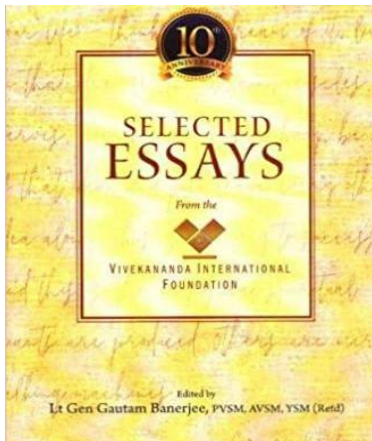
# Publications

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

## Glimpses

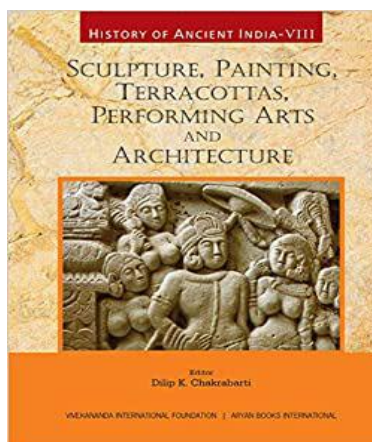
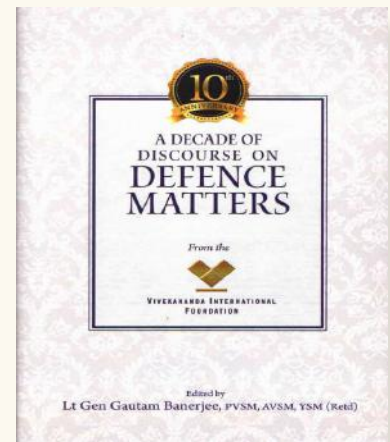


# Books

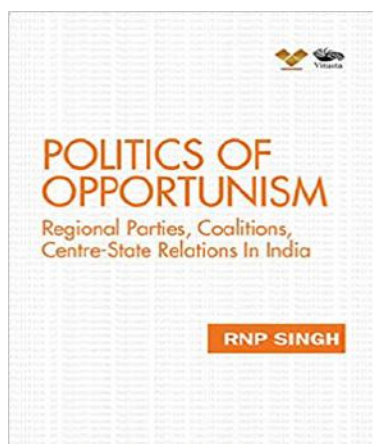


Over the past decade, the VIF has charted an academically independent path of research and analyses. The Foundation has thus been disseminating a vast stream of analyses of key developments and decision dilemmas concerning the nation to its wide circle of associates and readers. Non-partisan and balanced strategic objectivity, and conformity with India's exalted native civilisational values being its fundamental competencies, it has earned a reputation for the highest level of credibility among national and international opinion as well as decision makers which include governments, strategists and academia. To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Foundation, a selection of 15 articles of contemporary national concerns, along with analyses and prognoses, are presented in this volume after due revision and updating. Authored by the fraternity of VIF stalwarts, with a sprinkling of potential researchers, the topics chosen are diverse, and as the reader would find, the analyses are as concurrent today as when the papers were written in the past few years. The lead authors, of course, are among the top strategic thinkers of contemporary times—Shri S. Gurumurthy, Amb Satish Chandra, General N. C. Vij and Dr Arvind Gupta, to mention just a few. As the reader will appreciate, each article goes a step ahead to look beyond the usual, mundane discourses.

This book is a compilation of 30 pioneering papers on issues connected with India's national defence. These papers are a part of the vast repository of VIF publications over the past decade of its functioning as a strategic think tank with the purpose of addressing the complex commitments on defence that the State has been confronted with. The titles have been selected to cover a wide range of aspects of national defence and military administration, thus depicting a panorama of India's military security challenges. More importantly, as the reader would find, even the dated papers remain relevant to this day in charting the evolution of India's strategic concerns in a tumultuous security environment that we find ourselves. The book is premised at invoking national strategic conscience among the thinking fraternity. It is hoped that the analyses and inferences propositioned in the Book would generate informed debate on this sensitive subject.

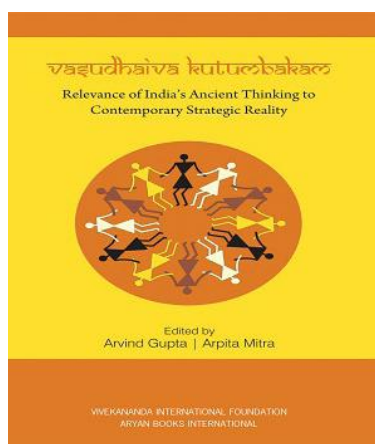
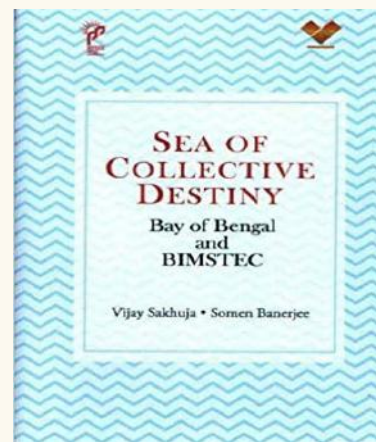


The present volume provides a thorough and meticulous introduction to India's sculpture, painting, terracottas, performing arts and architecture. In each case the coverage is extensive, supported by detailed references and should lead to further research and studies. What we would like to emphasize is that the volume does not claim to be even a reasonably exhaustive survey and analysis of the total range of ancient Indian data on art and architecture, but what it has certainly tried to convey is the depth and scale of all such artistic endeavours in the subcontinent. Ancient art occurs all over, from the heights of Ladakh and the jungles of Arunachal to the remote sea-shores of east, west and south India. Even the deserts of Rajasthan have their share of breathtaking temples and sculptures. Some terracottas from the Bengal delta are as sensuous as some Begram ivories from Afghanistan. The chronology of all these art-assemblages varies and even their quantity varies from area to area. The present volume offers a systematic evaluation of all the regional contexts along with the incorporation of new data and explanations in the case of early historic urbanism.

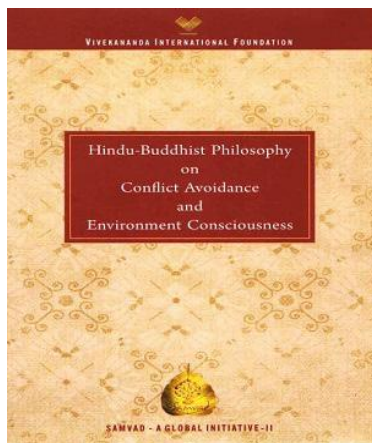


With over 2000 political parties registered with the Election Commission and national parties no longer being able to garner a simple majority, the rules of the game of politics in India are fast changing. There is little doubt that coalition governments are here to stay. But what about ideology and vision, dignity and ethics? Will they find a place in this power-hungry world of political opportunism? Rampant horse trading, brazen poaching of MLAs, defection and an inherent instability define coalition politics today the worst manipulator of the popular mandate. On the eve of the 2019 general elections, the book, *Politics of Opportunism: Regional Parties, Coalitions, Centre-State Relations in India*, gives you a crisp overview of the past and a critical look at India's political present, and charts the path of instability that has finally led to a firming up of India's democratic process.

BIMSTEC has evolved as an important multilateral institution around the geography of Bay of Bengal. Its significance has been spurred by regional governments who are proactively engaging to make BIMSTEC a vibrant institution. This book argues for promoting we-ness in the region and foster cooperation for regional integration. This book deals with a variety of issues, which are of great concern to the inhabitant of the region, namely, transnational organised crime, terrorism, global warming, marine pollution, non-traditional threat at sea, connectivity, economic regionalisation, blue economy etc. The main message of the book is that the people of Bay of Bengal region had historically shared a collective destiny. This is the time to resurrect old ties, which got badly disrupted due to geopolitics.

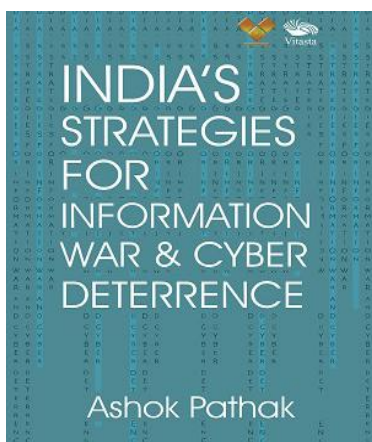
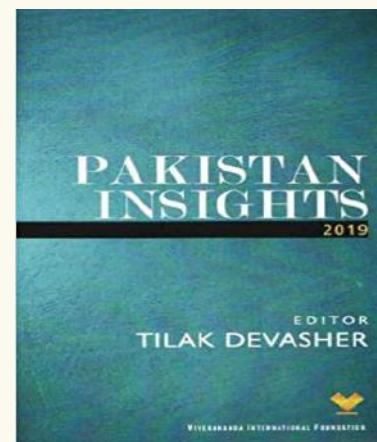


The adoption of 21st June as International Day of Yoga by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, in response to an India-led resolution with a record high number of co-sponsors, was a landmark event. In this backdrop, it is all the more important to mobilize our ancient resources of ideas and bring them to practical and strategic use in building an Indian narrative in every domain. With this aim in mind, in January 2019, VIF organised a two-day national seminar on *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Relevance of India's Ancient Thinking to Contemporary Strategic Reality* in collaboration with the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The proceedings of the seminar are being presented in the form of this edited volume, which contains contributions from eminent scholars, diplomats and strategic thinkers on different aspects of India's civilizational contribution and their relevance in international politics, diplomacy and projection of India's soft power. It will be of interest to readers of philosophy, history, political thought, international relations, diplomacy and India's strategic culture.



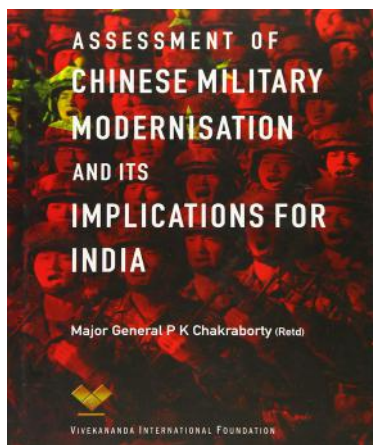
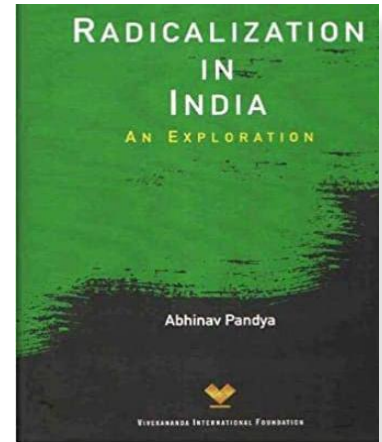
Driven by the myopia of profits and an ego that craves superiority over fellow brethren, man is leading a life of wanton devastation, and going through what is perhaps the most violent time in history. At stake is not just our own lives and values, but the environment that sustains us, and by extension therefore, the very future of our planet. Is this a one-way street? Or is there still scope for salvation? Can we redefine ethics to suit the broader common vision of all mankind? Can we rise above religious differences to create a common, working philosophy that works for both us, and our planet? If the tenets and essence of Hinduism and Buddhism are anything to go by, the answer is a resounding yes. Adaptation of a non-conflicting paradigm led by the Hindu-Buddhist values—whose adherents account for more than one-fifth of the world’s population and cognates cultures such as in India and Japan—can be used effectively to shift the focus from ‘conflict resolution’ to ‘conflict avoidance’ and the path of ‘ideology’ to ‘philosophy’. This book, attempts to answer one simple question: Can we offer a new model and vision for a world order based on democratic tradition that espouses the spirit of human cooperation, ethical behaviour, universal responsibility and prosperity of all nations? If we put our best foot forward, the answer could be yes.

In February 2018, the VIF set up the Pakistan Study Group (PSG) to discuss and debate issues relating to Pakistan in a holistic manner. Meeting almost every fortnight since its inception, the discussions have been forthright and candid as also enriching and valuable. Pakistan Insights include an overview of developments in Pakistan in 2018-19, the 2018 elections, the rise of the religious parties, especially the Barelvis, the future of Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistan Muslim League (N), the Aasia Bibi case, the Pashtun protests and the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement, pressures that Pakistan faces from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Pakistan’s economy and the challenges it confronts. The external section looks at Pakistan’s interactions with the key countries: Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the US. This section has articles on the prospects of Indo-Pak relations, the efficacy of the Track II process, the Balakote strike, developments in Gilgit Baltistan, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the complexities of the Afghan peace process, Pak-Afghan relations, Pak-US relations and the Pak-Saudi-Iran triangle. The book concludes with some thoughts on the future trajectory of Pakistan.



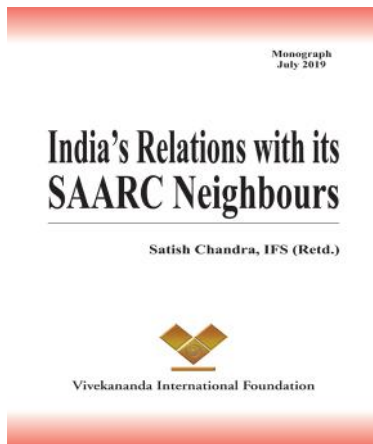
The concept of Information Warfare (IW) is as old as warfare itself but has gained in significance in recent times where we look at non-contact battles between two adversaries. This concept involves the use of information and communication technologies; and taking it a little further, it transforms into the use of computers and cyberspace in warfare. This book delves into this complex topic and brings out issues and facets especially pertaining to India. It emphasises that issues of National Security and Nation Building in this information age are intertwined. The leadership of today needs to give credence to this aspect and work towards strengthening strategies, which will eventually lead to a strong nation. While doing so, we must take measures to protect and nurture the core of our civilisation, which is several thousand years old. Our capability to fight without fear and ambiguity for safeguarding our nation and way of life must remain intact.

Kashmir has been in turmoil since the past three decades or so. The state of dissatisfaction in that part of a free, democratic, secular Indian nation is a rather perplexing development, the question being that how can any well groomed group of citizens, anywhere in the world, want to complain about their political rights in such a free and tolerant environment. The answer is not straightforward. Lastly, over the two decades or so, as the situation slipped from staged protests, sedation, insurgency, terrorism, and now fanatic religious radicalisation of the younger generation, the Union used force to keep Kashmir in control. But it overlooked the more salient follow-up imperative – offering the people a right nationalist narrative and follow it up with good governance. It is unfortunate that as the situation went from bad to worse, barring few, there was very little formal effort to delve into the roots of the problem. This book fills that gap.

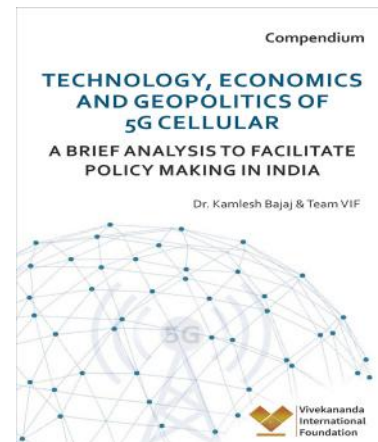


Ever since its creation, China has been claiming territories of numerous countries. There have been wars and clashes, and the usual tone of policy statements has remained assertive. After annexing Tibet the Communist China has described China as a palm with Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Arunachal and Ladakh as the country's five fingers. It is pertinent to note that some maps have even shown Assam and the Andaman Islands as a part of China. The standard tactics of gradual cartographic invasion seems to have been extended to new areas - tentatively, casually first and then with increasing emphasis till time comes to usurp the quest. Though Chinese White Papers always project a defensive and peaceful attitude, Beijing's intentions appear deceptive. China's official media continues to publicise articles that caution India about China retaining the option of initiating military hostilities. In India, China's prime target, however, there has been scant research on the modernisation of the Chinese Armed Forces and its impact on Indian security. This book is a small effort to fill that gap.

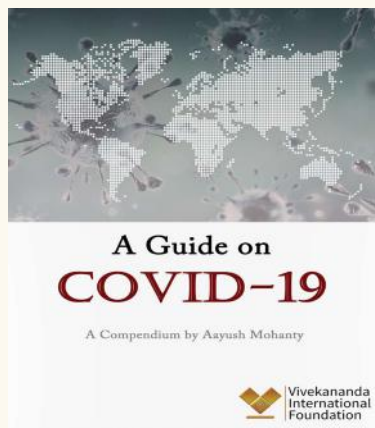
# Monographs | Compendiums



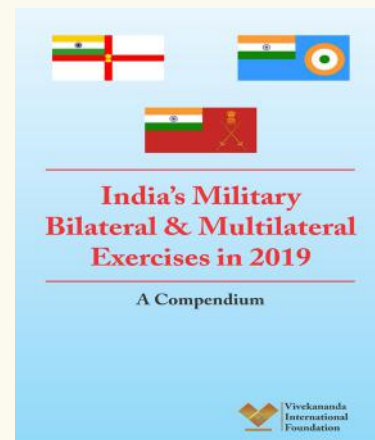
India's relations with its SAARC neighbours have, over the decades, oscillated from very good to stressed barring Pakistan and Bhutan. With the former they have generally been very bad and with the latter very good. With the rest, notably Afghanistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, they have seen many ups and downs.



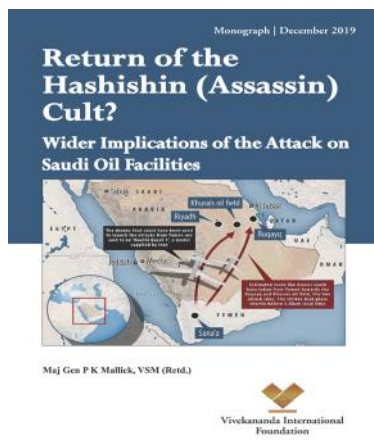
5G is an investment for the next decade. It is not just a game changer; it is likely emerge as a General Purpose Technology (GPT). 5G mobile will move from being a consumer device to an industrial productivity and efficiency tool, with billions of IoT devices connected seamlessly for transformative applications in all sectors of economies and governance models.



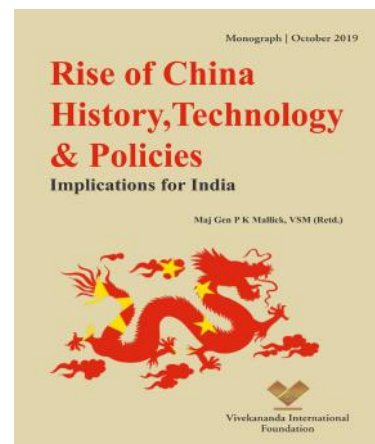
The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the toughest challenges humankind faces. Scores of people have been directly or indirectly affected by the pandemic. Major cities in India and abroad are under state-mandated lockdown while healthcare officials and workers all over the world along with essential services workforce are selflessly providing care to people who have been diagnosed or suspected to have the virus.



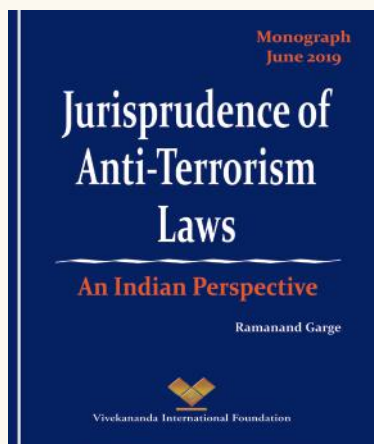
The Indian armed forces form an important component in projecting the Government of India's foreign policy on the world stage. India has always projected and cultivated a well-rounded relationship with its neighbours as well as with countries beyond the region, increasingly the armed forces of India have and will in the future contribute to this holistic outreach.



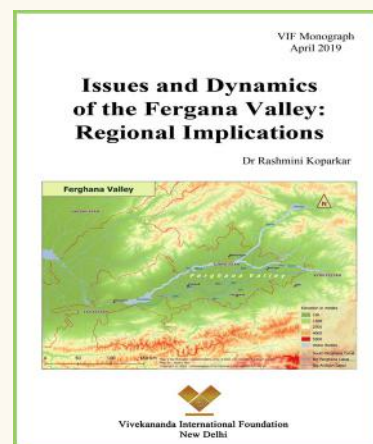
The attack on Saudi oil installations has large scale implications for the hydrocarbon supply to the world specially for countries like China, India and the Asian giants of Japan and South Korea. The Strait of Hormuz becomes critical for energy imports of these countries.



Since opening up to foreign trade and investment and implementing free market reforms in 1979, China has become the world's fastest-growing economy. China has transformed itself from a predominantly agricultural economy into a manufacturing powerhouse.

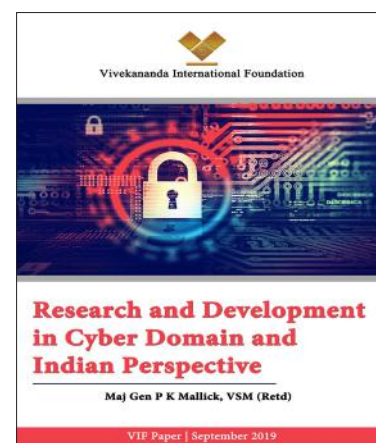
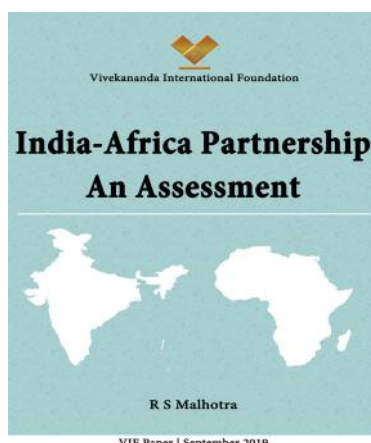
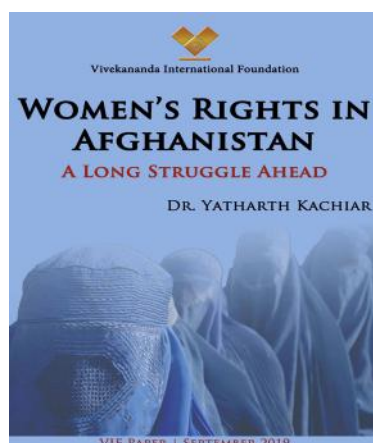
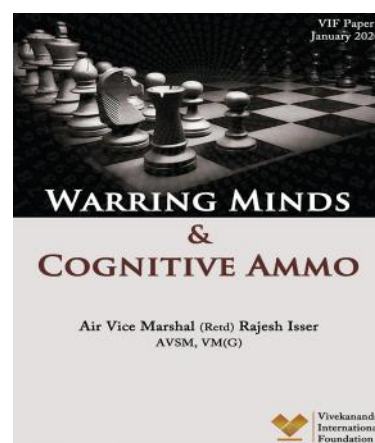
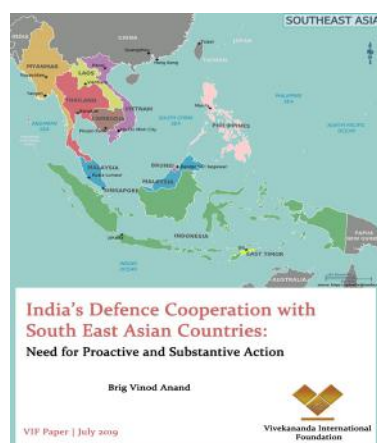
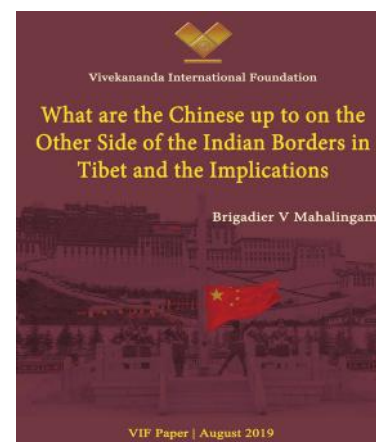
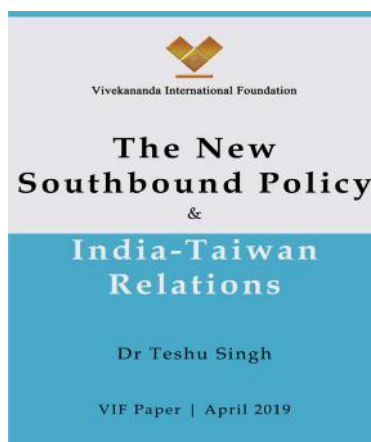


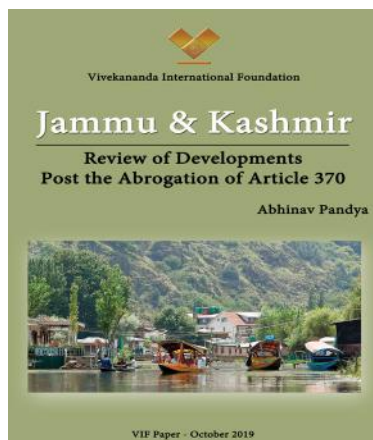
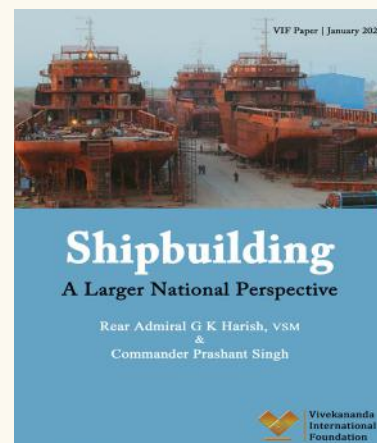
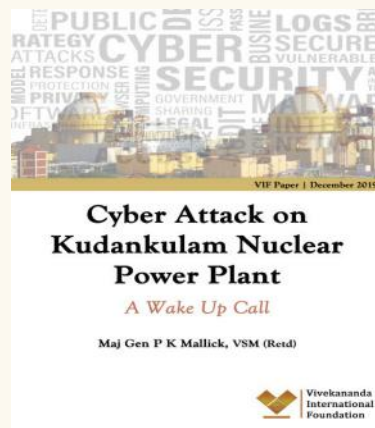
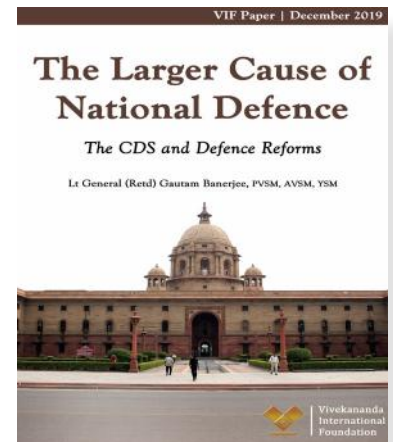
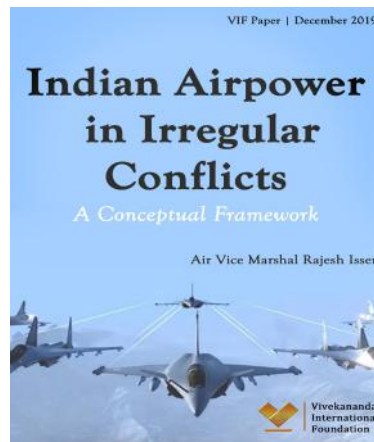
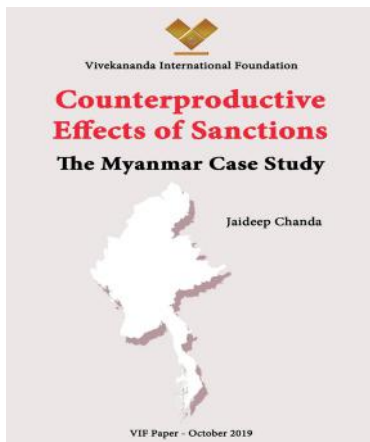
Counter-terrorism practices cannot be effective in the absence of firm and clear anti-terrorism law. In the last several decades, India has developed wide-ranging counter-terrorism practices and mechanism. Yet, it has neither a comprehensive anti-terrorism law nor a definition of terrorism. Plethora of separate legislations are being used in counter-terrorism practices. The concept of federal crime is also missing. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) set-up in 2008 to investigate into terrorism cases.



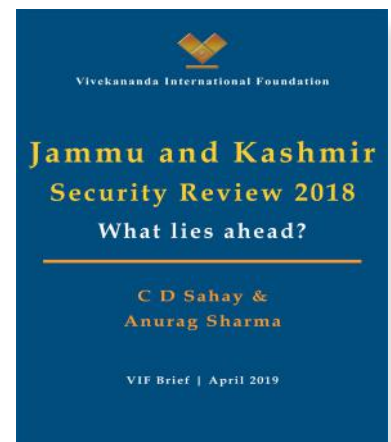
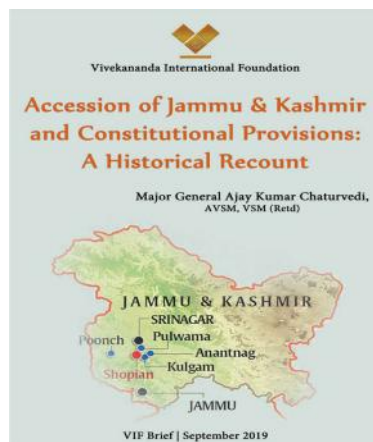
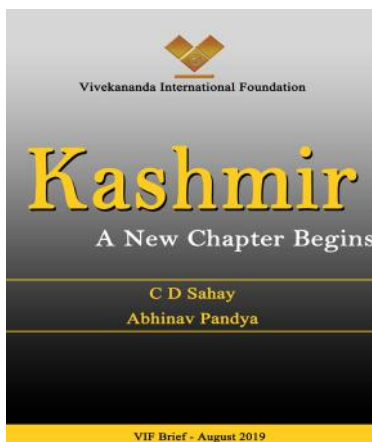
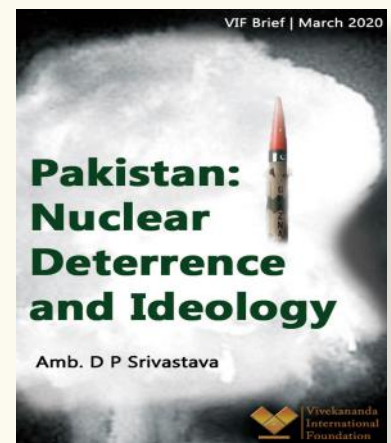
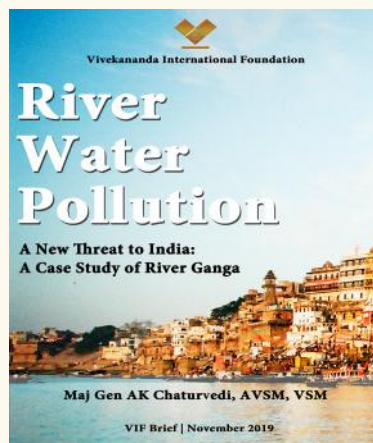
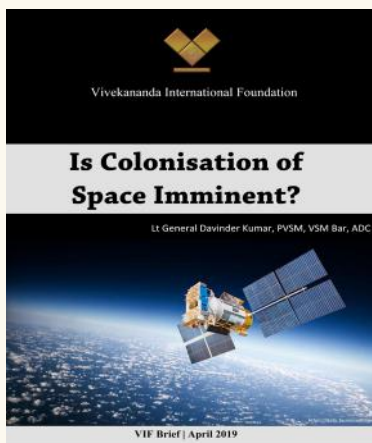
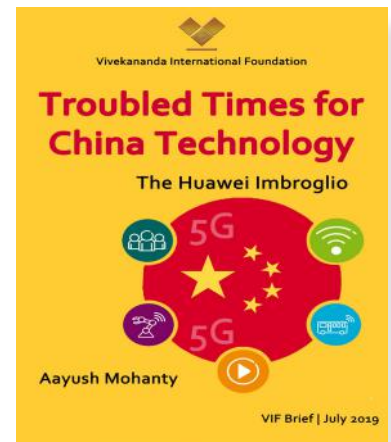
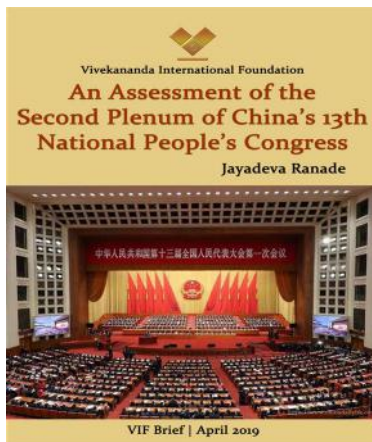
The Central Asian Region gained wider recognition in International Relations after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. The emergence of five independent nation-states in the heartland of Eurasia was, in fact, a matter of curiosity for the world community. At the same time, there were apprehensions about political stability, territorial integrity and economic viability of the Central Asian Republics (CARs) of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

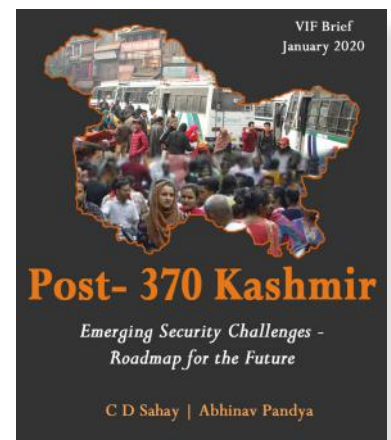
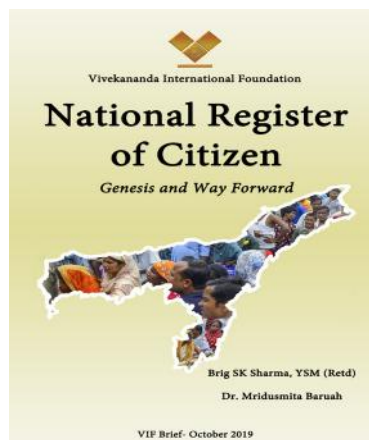
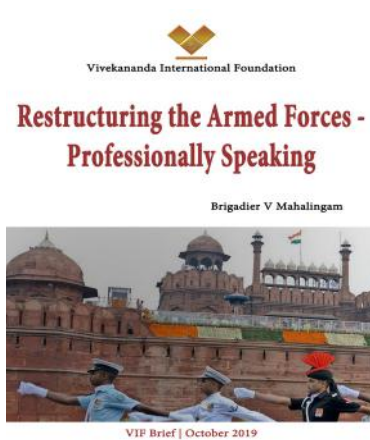
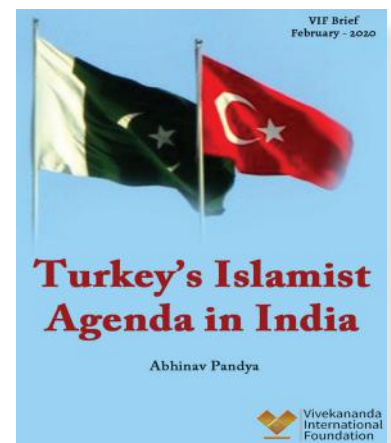
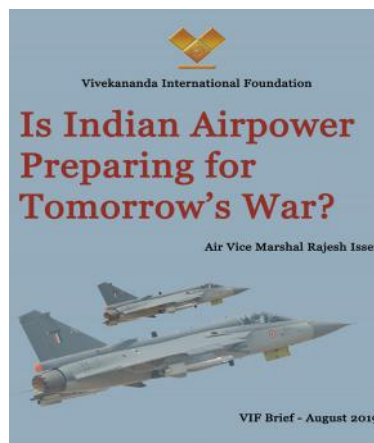
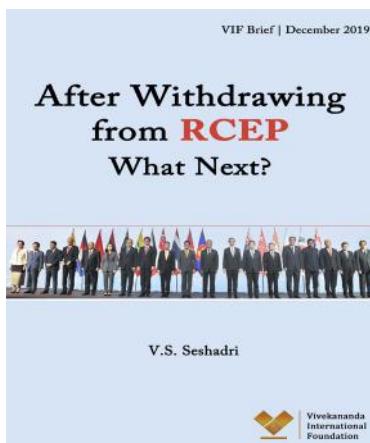
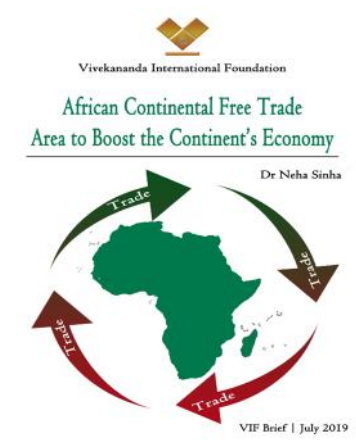
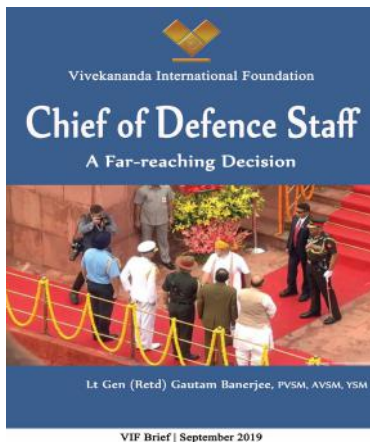
# Papers



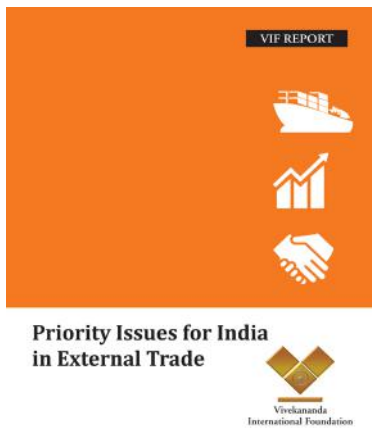


# Briefs





# Reports



Four broad concerns capture the current context surrounding India's external trade. First is our sluggish export performance for the last several years owing to global slowdown and also due to our declining competitiveness. With a share of 1.65 per cent in world goods exports today, India ranks 19th among all countries that is way below its size or GDP. India's merchandise imports has also gone past US\$ 500 billion now. The trade deficit at US\$ 176 billion in 2018-19 as a result is over 50 per cent of exports. The need for a strong push for manufacturing exports is compelling.

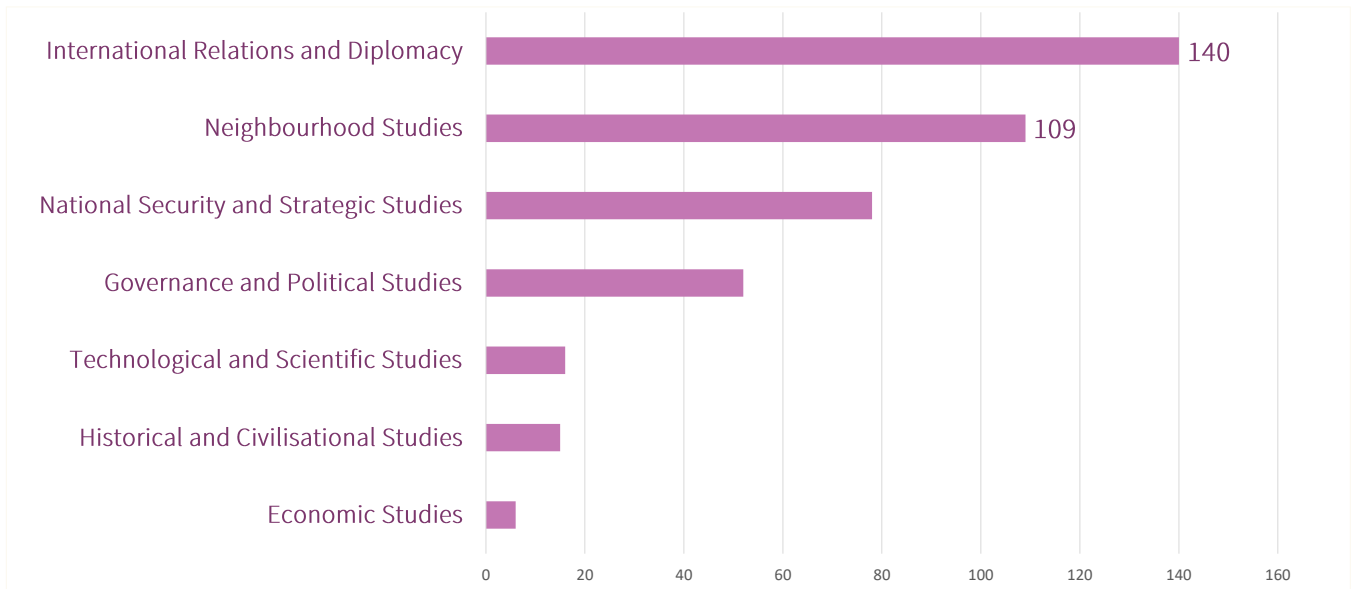


The Second BIMSTEC Think Tanks Dialogue on Regional Security was held at the VIF, New Delhi on 27-28 November 2019. Delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the BIMSTEC Secretariat participated in the meeting. Pursuant to the successful first meeting, the Second BIMSTEC Think Tanks Dialogue on Regional Security aimed to continue the robust interaction and deliberations by regional Think Tanks and strategic communities towards formalizing security cooperation including in non-traditional security, in the BIMSTEC region.

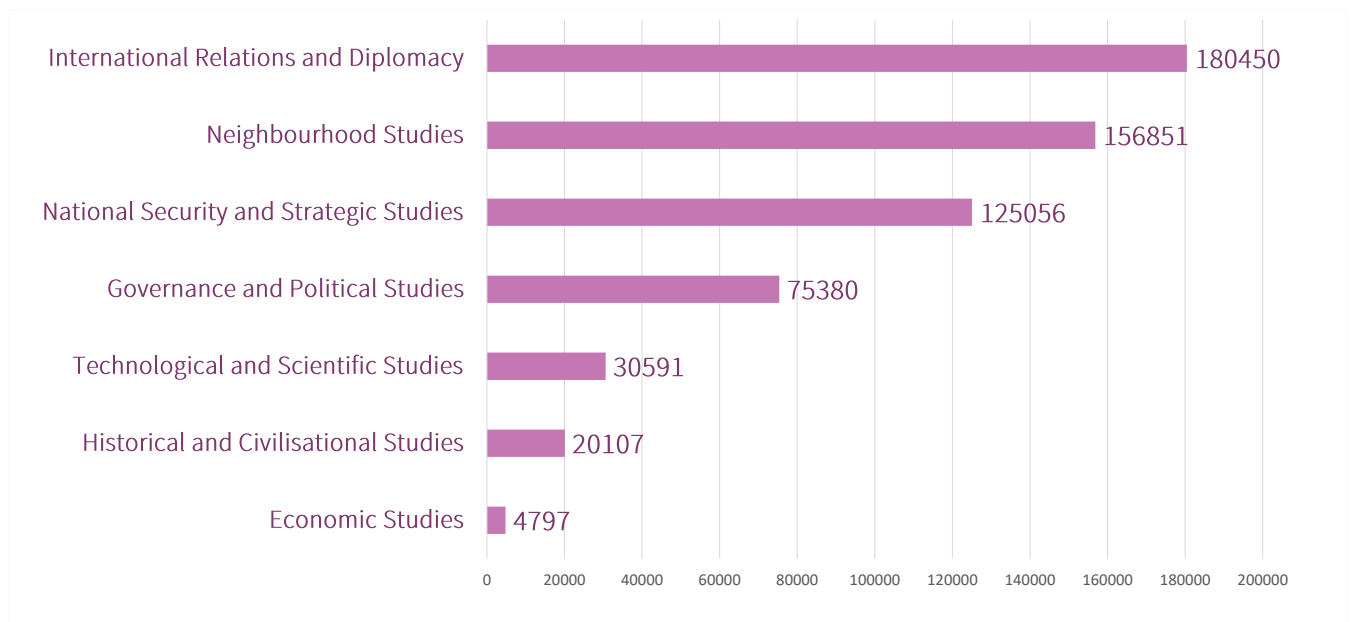


Across the globe and in India, much has been spoken and written about the growing uncertainties in the international strategic environment. While all eras bemoan the troubles inherent in their time, the current international environment is compounded by the wide-ranging interdependencies and linkages between countries, extremist ideologies, new lethal weapons, aggravated inequalities, mass migration, technology opening new frontiers etc.

## Number of VIF Publications per centre of study



## VIF Publications: views & downloads



# National Security

National Security is the VIF's quarterly publication series. It aims to cover traditional and non-traditional security threats to India. The publication is a platform for contributors to bring out new ideas and theories of new challenges to India at the national and global levels. National Security hosts Essays, Research Articles, and Book Reviews and, in some issues, a debate segment. Distinguished academicians, policy-makers from India and abroad have contributed to the publication.

Sweeping advances in technology is revolutionising industry, work, and the human condition. The impact is visible in virtually all sectors – economy, society, education, politics and national security. The remarkable changes in the digital space have widest impact on society, culture and economy. Concurrently, rapid acceleration and diffusion of dual use technologies for military applications in an increasingly globalised international system have vast implications for warfare and the global balance of power. The current issue of National Security therefore focused on the technology revolution and its wide impact on the nation. From agriculture to industry, education, industry and the military, India faces new and large challenges of reimagining its future course and its national strategy. It needs to seize the opportunities by building necessary technical and scientific capacities, and prepare for the disruptions. The special issue examined some of the key themes that need attention. Research Articles and Essays on crypto currency, Artificial intelligence in Cyber security, Industry 4.0 and how the Indian education system should prepare for it, decision intelligence technology for India's agricultural sector and, analysis of the future of manufacturing and technology in India and a host of other matters related to technology and security.



The Indo-Pacific concept has emerged as the most useful for grasping the maritime and strategic trends in the vast but increasingly integrated region stretching from the Gulf and East Africa to India and East Asia and then to the United States. As against the much-used term Asia-Pacific with its focus on the international politics of the Western Pacific and North Asia, or the Indian Ocean Rim that excludes the major powers of the East, the Indo-Pacific concept emphasizes the crucial role of India in the strategic system of the region, as well as the vital role of the United States, Japan, China, Australia, the ASEAN and Gulf states, and their interdependence and emerging rivalries. It is to comprehend the diverse perspectives, interests and strategies shaping the region related to China's rise and its assertive and expansionist posture unravels the established order, a new balance of power and institutional structure that can preserve peace will be needed. Subject experts, former diplomats from India, Australia and the United States of America contributed in the issue creating a space for views on Indo-Pacific strategy and its future enhanced by reviews of books on the subject matter.

India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has now evolved an alternative vision to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Combining his 'neighbourhood first' and Act East Policy, a new perspective on what would constitute a viable regional order has emerged. The orientation is towards the Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific. Thus, new life was infused into the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) that lay moribund for many years without a vision or a strong central organization. BIMSTEC seeks to integrate the entire region spread around the Bay of Bengal that at one time was deeply integrated and prosperous, and to serve as a bridge between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast and East Asia. This issue of National Security is devoted to examining the various perspectives on the BIMSTEC from within the region. They raise and answer many important questions. The BIMSTEC issue of National Security came soon after the VIF-BIMSTEC Security Dialogue and includes perspectives of authors from almost all countries who are a part of BIMSTEC. The essays and articles fill a genuine need to have a more engaged discourse and a wider body of literature on the theme.



# Activities

The Year 2019-20 saw the VIF steadfastly pursuing its mission. The VIF faculty of academic, civil service, diplomatic, military, economic, history and scientific luminaries, ably assisted by the young and energetic scholars with intellectual potential, has thus been eminently successful in propagating the Foundation's objectives. A glance through this Annual Report would highlight that fact.

Strategic studies, expert group confabulations and analyses undertaken by the VIF during the year covered the entire spectrum of national and International concerns. The Foundation organised regular Round Table Conferences, Seminars, Briefings and Brainstorming Sessions in which expert analysts, scholars and informed stakeholders participated. Eminent speakers were invited to speak at the Vimarsh series of lectures.

Well-regarded for its integrity and independent thinking, the VIF has been a much sought-after host

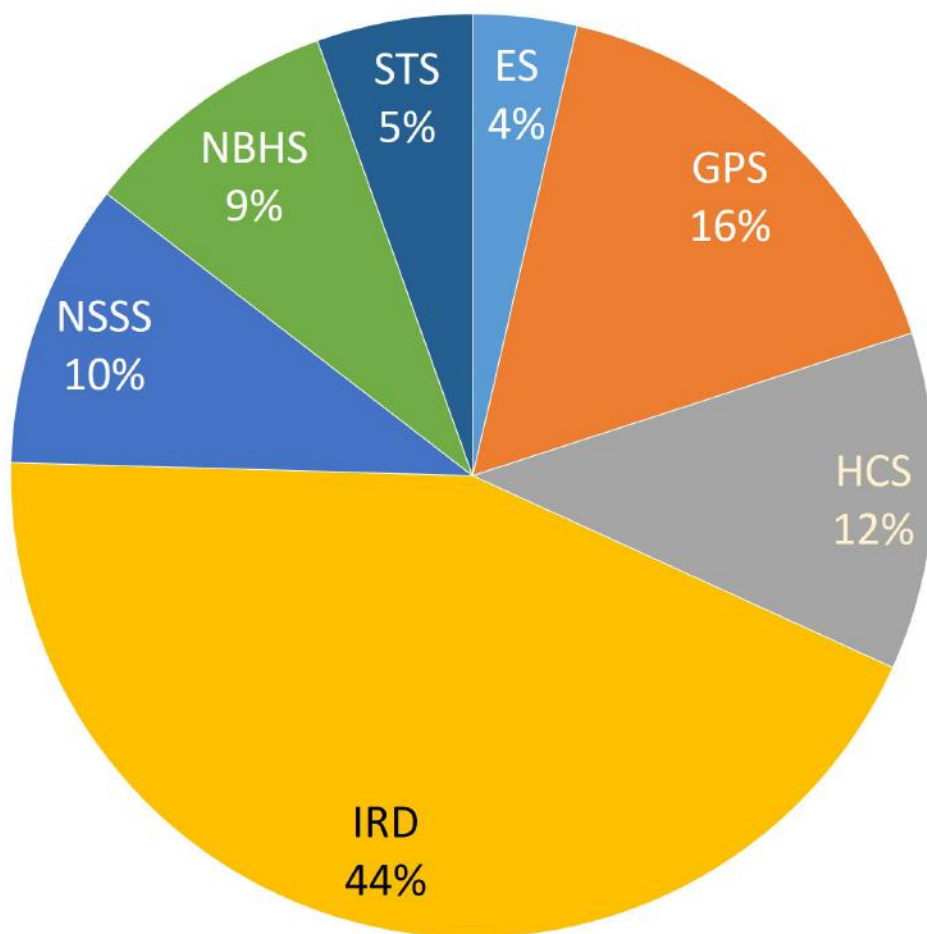
for strategic discussions with a large number of global strategic think tanks, opinion shapers and decision makers. Many top global think tanks, including those from the US, UK, Japan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Mongolia and Taiwan have forged associations with the Foundation for regular exchanges of strategic views and concerns. VIF faculty members have been much in demand at global and national level interactions, various seminars and group events. The VIF website which carries commentaries, articles, briefs, papers, monographs, books, and VIF News Digest is widely subscribed and highly regarded.

As the following pages of this Annual Report will show, the VIF has been relentless in its pursuit of excellence in intellectual research and analyses in the service of the nation.

Needless to emphasise, the Foundation resolves to strengthen its commitment and dedication in the coming years.



## *Seminars and Interactions held as per centres of Study*



<div></div>	IRD	- International Relations and Diplomacy
<div></div>	GPS	- Governance and Political Studies
<div></div>	HCS	- Historical and Civilisational Studies
<div></div>	NSSS	- National Security and Strategic Studies
<div></div>	NBHS	- Neighbourhood Studies
<div></div>	STS	- Scientific and Technological Studies
<div></div>	ES	- Economic Studies

Practical patriotism means not a mere sentiment or even emotion of love of the motherland but a passion to serve our fellow – countrymen. I have gone all over India on foot and have seen with my own eyes the ignorance, misery and squalor of our people. My whole soul is afire and I am burning with a fierce desire to change such evil conditions...If you want to find God, serve man.

**- Swami Vivekananda**



# **International Relations & Diplomacy**

# Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy

## USA

- **1 July 2019:** Interaction with the US Delegation, USARPAC
- **21 August 2019:** India-Japan-US Trilateral Workshop on Strategic Technology Cooperation
- **10-15 November 2019:** VIF Delegation visit to US
- **7 January 2020:** Overview on US-Iran tensions after death of Major General Qassim

## United Kingdom

- **9 March 2020:** Round Table discussion on Brexit

## Europe

- **4 December 2019:** Discussion with IISS on India's relations with the EU and the UK after Brexit

## Central Asia

- **23 January 2020:** RTD on India-Central Asia Relations

## Uzbekistan

- **13 November 2019:** Interaction with a visiting Uzbek Delegation

## Africa

- **20 November 2019:** Conference on India's Foreign Policy towards African Continent in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century-Prospects-for-Cooperation

## Namibia

- **1 October 2019:** Interaction with Prof. Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia (UNAM)

## Indian Ocean Region

- **17 October 2019:** Joint VIF-BHC-IISS conference on Co-Operation in the Indian Ocean Region

## Indo- Pacific

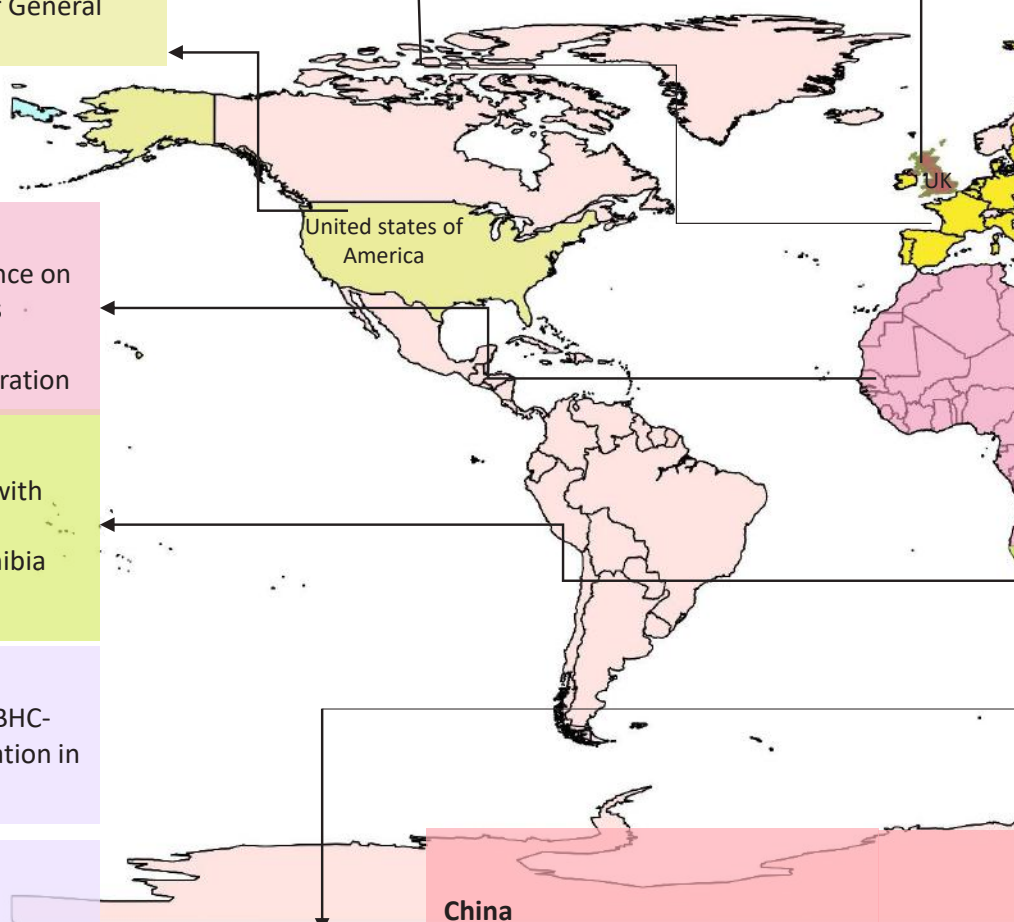
- **27 May 2019:** Interaction on Indonesia and the Indo-Pacific
- **9 September 2019:** Roundtable on the Indo-Pacific

## West Asia

- **12 July 2019:** Brainstorming session on India and West Asia – a new paradigm shift and policy options

## China

- **8 April 2019:** Seminar on Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative
- **16 April 2019:** Interaction with China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)
- **25 April 2019:** China-India Interaction from Bilateral to Regional Level, Sichuan University, Chengdu

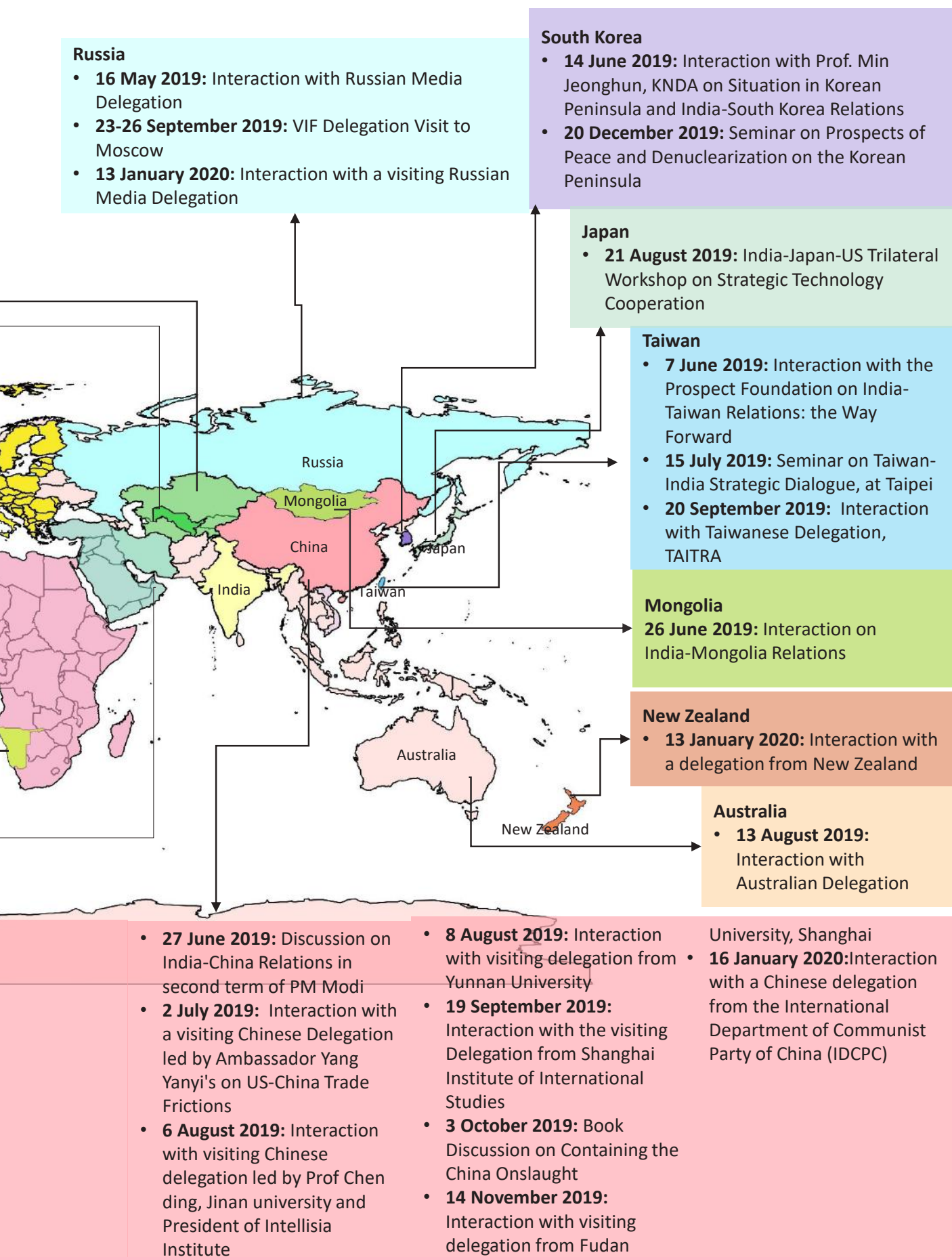


Map is for thematic representation only, it does not represent any legal survey.

Map by : Jyothy Nair

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## Glimpses



## Indo Pacific

The VIF kept its focus on the Indo-Pacific region through programmes and publications on maritime issues, regional developments and security matters. The Indo-Pacific was discussed as part of Indian Ocean, India's neighbourhood, littoral West Asia, BIMSTEC, Southeast Asia, Australia, Japan, Russia, US and, China. The discussions on role of technology and new security paradigms, economic issues were of relevance to the cluster. In February 2020, a task-force on the Indo-Pacific was constituted. Several meetings were held with delegations from China, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

A conference on Shipping and Ship-building in India was organised during the year.

## United States of America

During the year, the main highlight of the US studies programme has been the setting up of the US Experts Group comprising former diplomats, senior defence officers, representatives from academia, various think tanks and industry to discuss various facets of the United States, its relations with India, policies in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

In addition, several high-ranking US officials from the Trump administration have visited the VIF for interactions. On July 1, 2019, the VIF hosted a senior US Military delegation led by Maj Gen. Daniel F McDaniel, of the US Army Pacific (USARPAC) which is the largest US Army Service Component Command that encompasses strategic locations in Japan, South Korea, Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, and Guam. USARPAC is also the land forces component of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. It performs missions in Southeast Asia, in the countries stretching from the Philippines to Bangladesh and India. The discussion focused on developments and strategic

challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

On January 17, 2020 Lisa Curtis, deputy assistant to U.S. president Donald Trump, and Senior Director for South and Central Asia on the National Security Council along with Mike Passey visited the VIF for an interaction on the evolving situation in the region. Several other prominent visitors from the US came and discussed variety of issues of mutual interest. During the year the VIF continued with its engagements with various US based think tanks and hosted visiting delegations from the Hudson Institute, Heritage Foundation and the CSIS.

A delegation from the VIF visited Washington DC from 11 to 15 Nov 2019 for a bilateral dialogue on India-US relations with the Hudson Institute and a trilateral dialogue with the Heritage Foundation and the Jerusalem Centre. The VIF delegation participated in various high-level meetings in Washington DC. VIF team also met with US Lawmakers, senior US government officials and well-known members of the Indian Diaspora. Detailed interactions were held with Alice G Wells, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia at the US State Department and with Nisha Biswal, President of the U.S.-India Business Council and Senior Vice President for South Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

## Japan and Korean Peninsula Studies

2019 was an eventful year for Japan in both national and international domains. From an imperial transition to being the G20 Chair, to major trade agreements and the deadly Typhoon Hagibis, the year was filled with its share of ups and downs for Japan. In the context of Korean Peninsula, the high-level diplomacy of 2017-2018 for enabling peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula was relegated a back seat in 2019. The US and North Korean interlocutors failed to break the deadlock over removal of sanctions

from North Korea. The VIF held a series of discussions on Japan and Korean Peninsula during the year. There were interactions with Professor Kei Hakata, Seikei University (Japan) and a delegation visit from Korea National Diplomatic Academy (South Korea). The tradition of an annual meeting organised jointly by the VIF and Embassy of Republic of Korea in New Delhi was continued in 2019. Purna Gandhi (an Associate Fellow with the VIF) participated in the “2019 Korea Foundation-India Next Generation Policy Experts Study Tour to Korea” program during the year.

## China

The China Cluster at the VIF analyses and researches on the internal and external developments of India's largest neighbour, China. During the year the cluster organised round table discussions, seminars and conferences on a regular basis. The major focus of the cluster has been on India-China relations, US-China relations, China's role in the Indo-Pacific region, Chinese foreign policy, Chinese Communist Party, developments in Chinese society, role of the media, Chinese economy, trade and investments, Military modernization, security policies and developments in Taiwan, among others. The cluster regularly comes out with topical commentaries, briefs and papers. The cluster proposes to bring out a Compendium of Contemporary developments in China and an edited volume on One Belt One Road: An Indian Perspective in the coming year. The cluster has constituted a Task Force, 'Experts Group on China' to discuss pertinent issues related to external and internal 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 2019-2020 organised series of interactions and engaged with academicians, 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; Indian diaspora in the Persian Gulf states; the Syrian crisis; the US-Iran tensions; Israel-Palestine conflict; Libyan civil war; Yemeni civil war; street protests; role of global and regional actors in conflicts etc. The Cluster published monthly round ups of the major developments in the region between April 2019 and March 2020. The cluster facilitated the Agreement of Cooperation between the VIF and the West Asia North Africa Institute based in Amman, Jordan.

The West Asian region as well as India is currently facing similar non-traditional security threat 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 contexts, 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 Indian diaspora and the scope of remittances; investments between India and the West Asian states; trade and energy contracts and strategic cooperation. The economic consequences of the pandemic on the Gulf States have already affected the Indian diaspora. The Cluster would also seek to explore on India's role in reconstruction process in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq as well as Iran.

## Central Asia

During the past year, India's relation with Central Asian Republics (CARs) has gained momentum. The First ever India-Central Asia Dialogue at the Foreign Ministers level was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in January 2019. In the Samarkand Dialogue, a number of initiatives to enhance G2G cooperation were taken. The setting up an 'India-Central Asia Developmental Group' was announced. It was also decided to come up with an India-Central Asia Business Council to enhance trade and commerce between the two regions. On 6 February 2020, India-Central Asia Business Council was launched in New Delhi.

Regional cooperation between the Central Asian countries has witnessed increase in the previous year. The Second 'Consultative Meeting' of the Central Asian leaders held on 29 November 2019 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, has created more favourable environment for Indian engagement with these republics at regional level.

During the year, the Central Asia cluster at VIF held an interaction with a visiting delegation from the Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies (ISRS) of Uzbekistan. The agenda for the discussion broadly centered on India-Uzbekistan bilateral relations, regional security, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Afghanistan, connectivity issues and energy security. A roundtable discussion on India-Central Asia relations was also held in the beginning of 2020, where ambassadors of five CARs and Iran made presentations. The RTD was an attempt to have a fruitful discussion about the current status of India-Central Asia relations and to generate ideas for raising the profile of their bilateral relations. A number of policy recommendations came out after the discussions. Scholars associated to the cluster contributed various commentaries and articles

covering Future of Kazakhstan after Nazarbayev: An Assessment, US-Iran Conflict and its Impact on Central Asia: An Assessment', Trends in Central Asia in 2019, Geopolitics of Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline, Mike Pompeo's Visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan: What to Expect?, Presidential Elections in Kazakhstan: A Wave of Change or Continuation of Nazarbayev's Era?, 'Islamic State's Attack on Border Outpost in Tajikistan', India-Central Asia Business Council: Reinvigorating India-Central Asia Economic Engagement' among others.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 8 April 2019: Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative

The deliberations were divided in three broad themes: Aims and Drivers of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); Belt and Road Initiative and Regional Perspective; and India's approach to Belt and Road Initiative. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF delivered the opening remarks. Amb Ashok Kantha, Mr Jayadeva Ranade, Prof Sujit Dutta, Dr Pankaj Jha, Mr Sushant Sareen, Dr Sreeradha Datta, Amb D.P. Srivastava, Amb Anil Wadhwa, Dr Ruchita Beri, Amb Arun K. Singh, Lt Gen S L Narasimhan and Dr Arvind Virmani participated in the deliberations. In-depth discussions were held on the BRI and the Regional Perspectives covering Southeast Asia, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), South Asia, Central Asia, Europe and Africa.

### 16 April 2019: Interaction with China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

The VIF hosted a delegation consisted of researchers from various institutes of the CICIR.

While strategic studies are making headway in both countries it was proposed that cultural linkages too should be discussed as part of strategic studies. It was emphasised that India wanted inclusiveness and order in the region and that any change or challenge to that order may lead to problems in the economic situation and security. Any new development or negative changes in our neighbourhood has a profound effect on India's sense of well-being as 70% of world's trade passes through the Indian Ocean.

Both sides felt it is important for India and China to have a dialogue, and any extraordinary measure or action must need a lot of thinking. The 21st Century is Asia's century and the countries need to work towards creating enough room to accommodate each other.

### **25 April 2019: China-India Interaction from Bilateral to Regional Level, Sichuan University, Chengdu, China**

A conference on 'China-India Interaction: From Bilateral to Regional Level' was organised by The Centre for South Asia-West China Cooperation and Development Studies (SAWCCAD) and the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Sichuan University, Chengdu, China.

The deliberations were divided into three sessions: India and China - the Way Ahead; China, India and Major Powers and China, India and their Neighbourhood. Both the sides highlighted the developments and achievements in their respective economy, society, political and diplomatic issues.

There was consensus on the issue that India and China should work together for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

### **27 May 2019: Talk by H.E. Sidharto Suryodipuro, Ambassador of Indonesia to India**

The idea of Indo-Pacific is being widely used in policy and strategic circles. All of the World's great powers are physically present in the Indo-Pacific. Indo-Pacific is defined not only in geographical terms, but also defined in political-security terms. A major aspect in the Indo-Pacific is the maritime domain. It is home to some of the World's critical waterways and chokepoints. The global trade is sea-borne. The Indo-Pacific is also witnessing territorial disputes in the South China Sea. ASEAN is the key factor of the Indo-Pacific and Prime Minister Modi's speech at Shangri-La are identical to Indonesia's vision of the Indo-Pacific.

It was felt that India and Indonesia can enhance cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands can be connected with the triangle of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. India's Act East Policy and Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum are converging policies and both countries share the common strategic posture. India-Indonesia economic relations need to look beyond the traditional commodities and look into the areas of Internet of Things (IoT), information technology.

### **7 June 2019: Interaction with the Delegation from the Prospect Foundation**

It was observed that while India-Taiwan relations had progressed positively but the elementary issue remained its unofficial nature. The situation was further aggravated by the shrinking international space for Taiwan. Notably, Taiwan has advanced medical system and is considered to be the best in Southeast Asia.

India needs to accelerate cultural linkages with Taiwan, treat Taiwanese suppliers as opportunities, build partnerships for skill training, incentivise licensing of technology, promote brand Taiwan, and signal openness for both greenfield and brownfield investments. Overall, there was a consensus that impetus should be given to India-Taiwan relations from both sides.

#### **14 June 2019: Interaction with the Korean National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)**

The interaction covered a gamut of issues from the emerging discourse on Indo-Pacific to the peace process on Korean Peninsula. On Indo-Pacific, the Indian side asserted that it has historical interests in the region that go beyond aligning with the US articulation or containing China. India has constantly reiterated that it supports a free, open, inclusive and a rules-based Indo-Pacific order.

On North Korean crisis, both sides expressed concerns on the unravelling of the Hanoi Summit. Kim Jong Un had assumed the US would agree to sanctions relief in exchange for North Korea dismantling the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex. Yet, both sides remained optimistic in a third US-North Korean Summit by the end of the year to facilitate peace process on the Korean Peninsula. The role of China in dealing with the North Korean crisis (as it is viewed as the sole lifeline of North Korea) was also vigorously debated. The discussions were appraised as useful and insightful by both sides, in understanding perceptions and policies of India and South Korea.

#### **26 June 2019: Interaction with the Ambassador of Mongolia Mr Gonchig Ganbold**

The Ambassador delivered his opening remarks in the Hindi language and stated that his acquaintance

with India goes back to 1980s. India and Mongolia have concluded the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation in 1994, the Treaty on Comprehensive Partnership in 2008 and Treaty on Strategic Partnership in 2015. The centuries-old ties have now grown into 'Strategic Partnership'. He mentioned that despite the geographical distance both India and Mongolia have historical, religious and cultural linkages. Mongolia considers India as its 'Spiritual Third Neighbour'. Referring to the historical and cultural linkages he explained, Buddhism prevailed in Mongolia since the 5th century. He highlighted the historical linkages and stated that the 13th century Mongolian Manuscript refers to India as Hindu or Hindustan and the Indus River as Sindhi or a New river.

On the issue of Foreign Policy, the Ambassador highlighted the similarities between the two countries. India and Mongolia are part of the Non-Aligned Movement, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). Mongolia took part in the First Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in March 1947. In his speech he proposed for joint production of movies, establishing of friendship society and friends group of parliamentarians of India.

#### **27 June 2019: India-China Relations in the Second Term of Prime Minister Modi**

India-China bilateral relations has become a leader-led process wherein both the leaders have obtained charge of the affair. They are invested in the relationship than any leader before. This needs to be leveraged. It was felt that this is the best time to review bilateral relations. There are structural challenges that we have not addressed. The international order is changing rapidly and we are in a 'new normal'. Overall, the bilateral relations are better than it was a year ago. China is making adjustments vis-à-vis neighbouring countries. There is a need to

add fresh positive content to the relationship and closer developmental partnership. There is a need to deal with the simultaneous rise of India and China and their competing world views which raise serious doubt about each other.

## **2 July 2019: Interaction with the visiting Chinese Delegation led by Amb Yang Yanyi**

Amb Yang Yanyi gave a briefing on the Chinese perspective on US-China trade friction. She highlighted that the international order is going through a rapid change. In this new scenario, the US-led America first policy, unilateralism and protectionist were cause of major concern, she argued. The US is the biggest beneficiary of the trade that is supposed to be mutually beneficial. On the issue of the Intellectual Property Right (IPR), the US is complaining about IPR theft. She argued that these claims are baseless and instead the trade between the US and China has increased. On the US-China trade friction, the delegation further explained that the US was using China as a scapegoat. The Chinese delegation proposed that the US should aim at co-development.

## **12 July 2019: Brainstorming Session on India and West Asia – a New Paradigm Shift and Policy Options**

The deliberations broadly focussed on assessing the present situation in the West Asian Region especially after a spike in US-Iran tensions. Discussions were held on the impact on India in terms of energy security, Indian diaspora and security & policy options for India.

India requires a re-examination of its central premises in framing its West Asia policy. India's diplomatic overtures with regional organisations should be nurtured, but it should also engage with

informal coalitions such as Qatar, Turkey, Iran and Russia as well as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Israel and Egypt coalition. There is a need to generate expertise and create specialists with in-depth knowledge of the region who could be appointed in the Ministry of External Affairs and research think-tanks. On a multilateral level, India-West Asia summits could be organised to deepen engagement.

## **15 July 2019: Seminar on Taiwan-India Strategic Dialogue, at Taipei**

The Taiwan-India Strategic Dialogue was organised by the Prospect Foundation in Taipei. Dr Arvind Gupta, Lt Gen Ravi Sawhney and Dr Teshu Singh participated in the dialogue on behalf of the VIF. Amb Tan-Sun Chen, I-Chung Lai, Dr Cheng-Yi Lin, Prof Mumin Chen, Norah Huang and Sophia participated from the Prospect Foundation. The discussion was divided into two sessions: Developments of Power Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific and India-Taiwan: the Way Forward.

The delegation also had interactions with Chien-Jen Chen, Vice President of Taiwan, Arthur Iap, Deputy Security General, National Security Council, Dr Hsu Szu-Chien, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yu-Chin Hsu, Deputy Minister of Science and Technology and John Chen-Chung Deng, Chief Negotiator, office of the trade negotiation, Executive Yuan. Indian Participants gave a detailed account of the India-Taiwan relations. They elaborated on the important dimension of the India-Taiwan relations - Trade and Investments, Education, Science and Technology and People to People Exchanges.

## **6 August 2019: Interaction with Intellisias Institute, Guangzhou, China**

The VIF hosted an interaction with a delegation from the Intellisias Institute, Guangzhou. Director, VIF presided over the interaction. The discussion was

focused on technology, maritime issues, and economy. The Chinese delegation stated that Southern China had more freedom compared to the rest of China and is the economic hub of the country. Most of the start-up's and high-end manufacturing is in the Greater Bay Area. While addressing trade issues, there is a general understanding in China that trade with India is imbalanced. Underlying trust is an important cornerstone of relations and strategic communities of both countries should work towards ensuring that differences does not become disputes.

### **8 August 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from Yunnan University**

The Chinese delegation highlighted the role of Yunnan Province in overall Chinese diplomacy, especially towards South and Southeast Asia. They also informed that the Yunnan University had started a centre for Hindi language and there are about 40 Chinese students taking the course. The Chinese participants shared their views on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and expressed concern on the functioning of the grouping and its likely future. The Indian side explained that the grouping aims to maintain a strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific region. It serves the purpose of coordination in the Indo-Pacific region and is not aimed at anyone. Overall, the Chinese delegation felt that both India and China have a lot of opportunity for cooperation. There is a prospect for India-China cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and specifically in Myanmar on hydro-power and other projects.

### **21 August 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)**

The Chinese delegates were keen to know if India

is rethinking its stance on joining Belt and Road Initiative. The Indian participants clarified that the Indian position stands unchanged. Any project that violates the territorial sovereignty of the country cannot be considered at any point of time. Moreover, it is a unilateral project launched without any consultations with India. Hence, it is unlikely that India is going to change its stance on the initiative. The delegation was hopeful that the prospect of India and China cooperation can be taken to the next level. The Chinese experts said that they expect Varanasi Summit will raise the 'Wuhan Spirit' to new heights.

### **22 August 2019: Interaction with Sichuan University**

Lt. Gen Sawhney, Centre Head, National Security & Strategic Studies moderated the discussions that took place between VIF and Sichuan University. He expressed hope that the discussions between the two would help influence policy making and called for more collaborations between the two institutions.

The effect of the trade issues between U.S and China is no longer restricted to tariffs but is also a struggle for technological dominance. Earlier the principal issue between major powers was military, but now trade and technology have become points of competition. While observing how China behaves as it grows, particularly its policies in the region, its policies towards great powers, neighbours, etc., he said China's help to Pakistan regarding Kashmir, which was an internal matter of India, by calling a UN Security Council closed door meeting is a setback to India-China relations.

### **9 September 2019: Round Table Discussion on the Indo-Pacific**

Since the past few years, the term 'Indo-Pacific' is widely used in the strategic circles though ambiguities

remain of the concept and also because it is subjective to an extent. Yet Indo-Pacific is a strategic reality today. The idea of this RTD was to brainstorm on the implications of the Indo-Pacific construct for India. The round table examined the role of the Indo-Pacific from all quarters - national perspective, implications for regional and sub-regional organisations, security considerations and, more importantly the economic underpinnings of the Indo-Pacific.

### **19 September 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from Shanghai Institute of International Studies**

The delegation was led by Dr Chen Dongxiao. Both sides agreed that there should be frequent people to people exchanges. It was agreed that both countries should take responsibility to pave the way for long term sustainable relations.

### **20 September 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from Taiwan External Trade Development Council**

A delegation from the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), Taiwan led by Shih-Chung Liu, Vice-Chairman of TAITRA visited the VIF and held discussions on issues of mutual interest.

### **1 October 2019: Visit of Professor Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia to VIF**

The VIF hosted Professor Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor of University of Namibia (UNAM). Director, VIF, and the Professor Matengu discussed the warm and cordial relationship that India and Namibia share. They examined India's commitment towards Namibia in human resource development and capacity building through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) and other bilateral programmes.

### **3 October 2019: Discussion on Book-Containing the China Onslaught**

The book authored by Shri Pradip Baijal (a former Indian Administrative Service official) gives an insight into China's rise and what are India's options as far as coping up with the implications of the rise. China's hegemonic tendencies are now becoming a cause for worry primarily through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For India, China's rise is an issue to be pondered upon as China continues to build and invest in ports, roads, airports in its neighbourhood and through India's territory under Pakistan's occupation.

### **17 October 2019: VIF-IISS-BHC Roundtable on the Indian Ocean**

The VIF in conjuncture with the Institute of International and Strategic Studies, (IISS) London and the British High Commission organised a day-long roundtable on the Indian Ocean. The idea behind this initiative was to have a frank and candid discussion on the interests of India and the UK in the Indian Ocean, the security concerns and objectives and explore vistas for cooperation and collaboration. The roundtable saw attendance of many distinguished personalities from the strategic community, officers from the three services, scholars and persons from the media. There were four sessions in total that discussed security objectives of both India and the UK and explored avenues for cooperation in security, blue economy and environmental protection.

### **8 November 2019: Interactive Session on Humanitarian Crisis in Syria: Truth & Disinformation**

Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF delivered his opening remarks followed by a brief summary by the Russian Ambassador to India, Mr Nikolay Rishatovich Kudashev. Dr Maxim Grigoryev, Director of the

Foundation for the Study of Democracy, Moscow was the main speaker. The discussion focused on the Russian role in the Syrian civil war and their contribution to reconstruction and institution-building in Syria. The discussion offered valuable insights over the usage of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war. The interaction broadly-offered an alternative narrative over sensitive issues during the course of the Syrian civil war.

### **11-15 November 2019: VIF Delegation in Washington DC**

The VIF delegation participated in various high-level meetings in Washington DC. The delegation met the US Lawmakers, senior US government officials, including Alice G Wells, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia at the US State Department, Ms Nisha Biswal, President of the U.S.-India Business Council and Senior Vice President for South Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The bilateral dialogue with the Hudson Institute focused on the two key areas of Indo-Pacific and China's rise and on Afghanistan's future. There was agreement that India and the United States share common values and strategic interests. This was followed by a Trilateral Dialogue with the Heritage Foundation and Jerusalem Centre. This Dialogue is based on the understanding that recent years have witnessed new patterns of cooperation among India, Israel, and the U.S., three key democracies that face common threats from Islamist terrorism and share common values. The VIF delegation also held a Round Table discussion on US-India Defence Relations with the Defence wing of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum. The Indian side conveyed its hopes for a broader vision in US strategic thinking that would move US policy beyond mere "fashion statements" through a sincere commitment to take definite steps

to remove the irritants in the relationship.

### **13 November 2019: Interaction with the visiting Delegation from the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS) of Uzbekistan**

The VIF hosted an interaction with a visiting Delegation from ISRS, Uzbekistan, led by Mr F. Djuraev, Head of Department ISRS. Other members of the Delegation included Mrs D. Mamatkulova, leading Research Fellow, ISRS, Mr Azamjon Mansurov, and Major Muhammad Tukhtanazarov, from the Uzbek embassy in India.

The agenda for the discussion broadly centred on India-Uzbekistan bilateral relations, regional security, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Afghanistan, connectivity issues and energy security.

### **14 November 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from the Fudan University, Shanghai**

The Delegation was led by Zhang Weiwei, Distinguished Professor of International Relations and Director of the China Institute at Fudan University. The other members of the delegations were Zhu Caihua, Fan Yongpeng, and Lin Minwang. Hu Hailiang and Qin Wenci were from the Division of Information and Public Diplomacy, Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

The interaction covered the New Global Order, Indo-Pacific, Belt and Road Initiative, RCEP and India-China bilateral Relations. Overall, there was consensus that both countries have to work together for the realisation of a peaceful Asian Century. There are issues like climate change, food security, trade, were both countries need to work together.

## **20 November 2019: Conference on India's Foreign Policy towards African Continent in the 21st Century: Prospects for Cooperation**

The VIF organised a conference on 'India's Foreign Policy towards African Continent in the 21st Century: Prospects for Cooperation' on 20th November, 2019. The participants consisted of ten Ambassadors and High Commissioners from different African nations, several scholars and experts, former diplomats, and military officers. The conference was divided under three themes: i) Strengthening India-Africa Foreign Policy: Need for Cooperation; ii) Factoring Diaspora in India-Africa Relations: Enhancing Economic and Development Cooperation; and iii) India – Africa on Maritime Security: Prospects and Challenges.

## **4 December 2019: VIF-IISS Roundtable on India's Relations with the EU and the UK after Brexit**

The Roundtable focused on addressing the implications of Brexit on India's Relations with the EU and the UK. The discussion was moderated by Amb Kanwal Sibal, Member of VIF Advisory Council. Some of the salient points raised in the presentations and the consequent discussion focused on the thematic issues of Consumption of all UK political capital on Brexit, Growing Convergence between India and the EU, UK's undue support for Pakistan, Post-Brexit UK's support for multilateralism in international relations, India-UK Security Partnership: Defense Manufacturing and Maritime Security, India-UK Economic, Trade and Financial Cooperation.

Both sides noted the frank and extensive discussion encompassing a broad range of issues and decided the need to continue the VIF-IISS dialogue that would enable both countries to pursue a mutually beneficial and strong bilateral relationship.

## **20 December 2019: VIF-Embassy of ROK Seminar on Prospects of Peace and Denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula**

The discussions deliberated on the diplomatic lull after the Hanoi Summit and the potential unravelling of the thaw between the US and North Korea. The high-level diplomacy of 2017-2018 for enabling peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula was relegated a back seat in 2019. Though the crisis with North Korea is less acute now than it was in 2016-2017, but the progress is modest and subject to change at any moment. While North Korea does not want to return to the pre-Singapore Summit situation, it wants to avoid giving the US advantage in the negotiations. The emergence of a nascent Market Economy in North Korea has provided it more resilience than earlier imagined. On the question of India's Role in the North Korean crisis, it was maintained that while India had a limited role, it had an abiding interest in peace and stability of Korean peninsula. India shares international community's concerns with regard to North Korea's destabilizing activities which adversely impact peace and stability in the region and beyond. India has called upon North Korea to refrain from such actions.

## **07 January 2020: Interaction on US-Iran tensions after the death of Major General Qassem Soleimani**

The legality of killing Soleimani was questioned and it was agreed that the Iranian state is ideologically driven and it would continue to push its national objectives. Therefore, the death of the senior general is unlikely to deflect its strategic pursuits. Domestically, Iran witnessed protests in late 2019 indicating frustration with the regime. However, the killing has rallied the people behind the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp. (IRGC) and re-ignited the spurt of Iranian nationalism. In Iraq, the sentiments against external

intervention which was directed towards Iran has been diverted towards the US.

### **13 January 2020: Interaction with a delegation from New Zealand**

The delegation comprised of Commodore Mellissa Ross, Deputy Chief of the Navy, Ms. Erin Duncan, Deputy High Commissioner to India, Ms. Suzannah Jessep, Director of Research and Engagement at the Asia New Zealand Foundation, Manjeet S. Pardesi, Senior Lecturer in the Political Science and IR Programme and Asia Research Fellow, Centre for Strategic Studies at Victoria University, Wellington, Mr Toby Estall, Analyst, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and Ms. Katie Bradford, senior reporter with 1News/TVNZ.

As democracies, India and New Zealand have common interest in the reforming of international institutions. It was felt that India and New Zealand could cooperate and collaborate in the Pacific Islands. Both have policies to strengthen their neighbourhood and enhance their resilience. India's interest in Pacific is encouraging and New Zealand would like interested countries to follow New Zealand's model of partnership in Pacific Islands. Care should be taken that smaller nations do not fall into the debt-trap and other kinds of entrapment. Climate change is a serious concern, COP targets are failing, extreme events are impacting India's coastal environment. New Zealand and the islands in Pacific are also affected. India is trying to build a disaster-resilience initiative and would like to work closely with New Zealand.

### **13 January 2020: Interaction with Dr C Raja Mohan, Director, ISAS, National University of Singapore**

Dr Raja Mohan focused his talk on structural drivers that shape and impact international relations

and global dynamics. He emphasized that the west was going through a once in a century turmoil. Post the Great Depression and the interwar period, there was emergence of a large number of progressive movements in the United States and elsewhere in the Western world. As a response to the deep internal crisis in capitalism and resultant unemployment, including the emergence of Soviet Union externally as an ideological challenger, compelled western countries to build welfare societies. Dr Mohan asserted the possibility of the Trump administration decreasing US security commitments by way of military retrenchment around the world including Japan and Germany. He highlighted Climate Change and Data Governance as major issues of international discourse today. He stated that it is the data analytics that gives value to data, implicitly underscoring India must review its stand on data localization. Overall, in conclusion he greatly emphasized the need for India to expedite its reforms so that it can fulfil its economic ambitions and strengthen its national security.

### **16 January 2020: Interaction with International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC)**

The delegation was led by Dong Weihua, Deputy Director-General of Research, Office of International Department of CPC, and Vice Secretary General of China Council for BRICS Think Tank Cooperation (CCBTC). The interaction covered India-China relations, China-Pakistan relations, Indo-Pacific and Quad and the role of BRICS.

### **23 January 2020: Discussion on India-Central Asia Relations**

Director VIF, delivered the opening remarks followed by a key note address by Amb Pankaj Saran, Deputy National Security Advisor, Govt. of India. Mr

Manish Prabhat, Joint Secretary (Eurasia Division, Ministry of External Affairs) also delivered his remarks on India-Central Asia relations. Ambassadors of five Central Asian Republics along with Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran made presentations at the RTD.

A brief Presentation was made by Amb DP Srivastava, Distinguished Fellow, VIF on India's connectivity initiatives with regard to Central Asian region. Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Russian Federation also took part in the discussions.

The RTD was an attempt to have a fruitful discussion about the current status of India-Central Asia relations and to generate ideas for raising the profile of their bilateral relations. The RTD noted that the India-Central Asia relations have experienced gradual growth irrespective of absence of direct access. It was felt increasing cooperation between India and Central Asia will promote security, stability, economic growth and development of the region.

### **3 February 2020: Roundtable on Managing India's Relations with the Four Major Powers in an Unpredictable World**

The meeting was attended by many retired diplomats and military officials. The round table raised many pragmatic insights and concerns regarding India's external engagement with the four major powers, i.e., the United States, China, Russia and Japan. European powers such as France, Germany, Gulf countries, African Union, ASEAN have a strategic bearing on India, but the relations with the four major powers have a larger disproportionate impact. Relations with them help drive India's economy, trade, defense capabilities, diplomacy with other countries/regions, neighbourhood, old and new multilateral initiatives, innovation capacities and security of the larger Indian Ocean itself.

The meeting highlighted that while Strategic Autonomy remains relevant; India shouldn't fall into the equidistance trap. Further, India cannot be unmindful of the impact its internal developments have on its external relations. The contradictions between expanding India's market to expedite its growth rates, and the politico-social welfarism to protect the poorest will have to be managed. Also, the reticence towards building hard power needs to be done away with. India will need to build up both its economy and the military; there really is no other way to safely mitigate the foreboding international uncertainty and troubles in global economy.

### **2 March 2020: Interaction with the UN Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People**

The UN Committee was represented by Amb Cheikh Niang, Chair and Permanent Representative (PR) of Senegal; Amb Syed Mohamad Hasrin bin Tengku Hussin, PR of Malaysia; Amb Mohammad K. Koba, DPR of Indonesia; Amb Majed Bamya from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine; Elio Tamburi, Director of the Division for Palestinian Rights (DPR), UN Department of Political and Peace building Affairs (DPPA) and Naoko Kuramochi, Political Affairs Officer, DPPA/DPR. The Palestinian Ambassador to India, Adnan Abu Al Hija and Dr Abdelrazeg Abu Jazer, Counsellor, Embassy of the State of Palestine were also present for the event.

The committee expressed satisfaction with India's position that aims towards reaching a two-state solution based on dialogue. India is recognised as a leader in the global south with principled positions on multilateralism, democratic ideals and justice. The Committee sought to align policy positions with India in the UN. The Committee expressed gratitude to India for its contribution to UN Relief and Works Agency

(UNRWA) and for providing technical cooperation to Palestinians. India has successfully de-hyphenated its relations with both Israel and Palestine. The Committee appealed to India that enjoys close ties with Israel to utilize its influence to raise the concerns of Palestinians.

### **9 March 2020: Discussion on Brexit and its Impact on the European Union: Implications for India**

Nearly four years after holding the fateful referendum to leave the European Union, the United Kingdom eventually ceased to be an EU member on 31 January 2020. The country, however, would remain a part of the Customs Union till the culmination of the transition phase in December

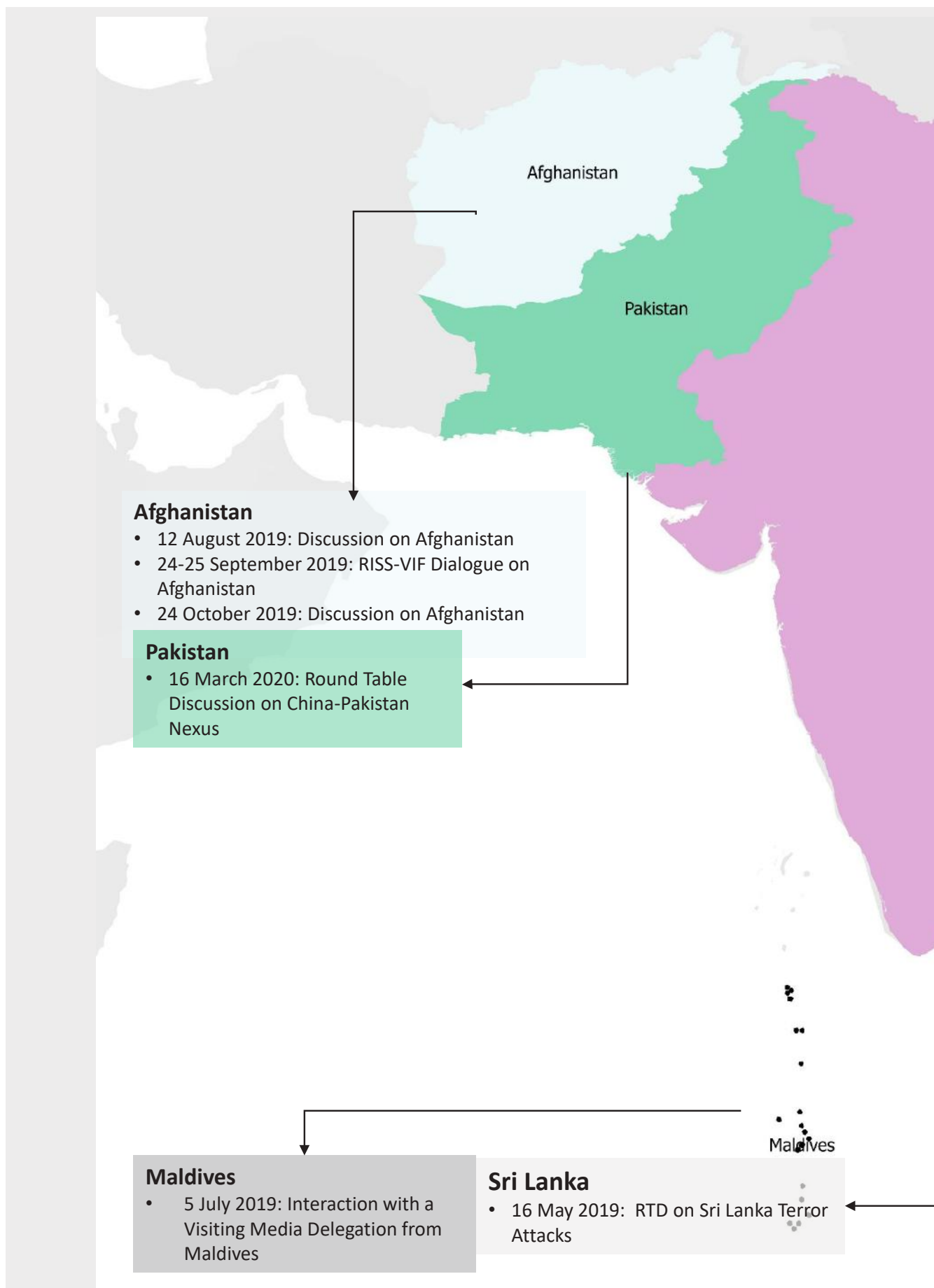
2020. During this transition phase several existing arrangements including freedom of movement, cross-border travel and personal rights of citizens would continue post which the UK is expected to introduce a new immigration policy. This implies that new arrangements for trade, customs, travel and regulation with the EU and the rest of the world would have to be worked out in this period. To address the changed dynamic post Brexit as well as its impact on the EU, the VIF organised a roundtable discussion on March 9. Former diplomats, with experience in one or more EU member countries participated in the brainstorming session and highlighted the key issues surrounding Brexit and its overall implications, including those for India.

We must educate every Indian, man, woman and child, in the ideals of our religion and philosophy before we can rationally expect our society to reshape itself in the full and perfect spirit of the Vedantic gospel of equality.

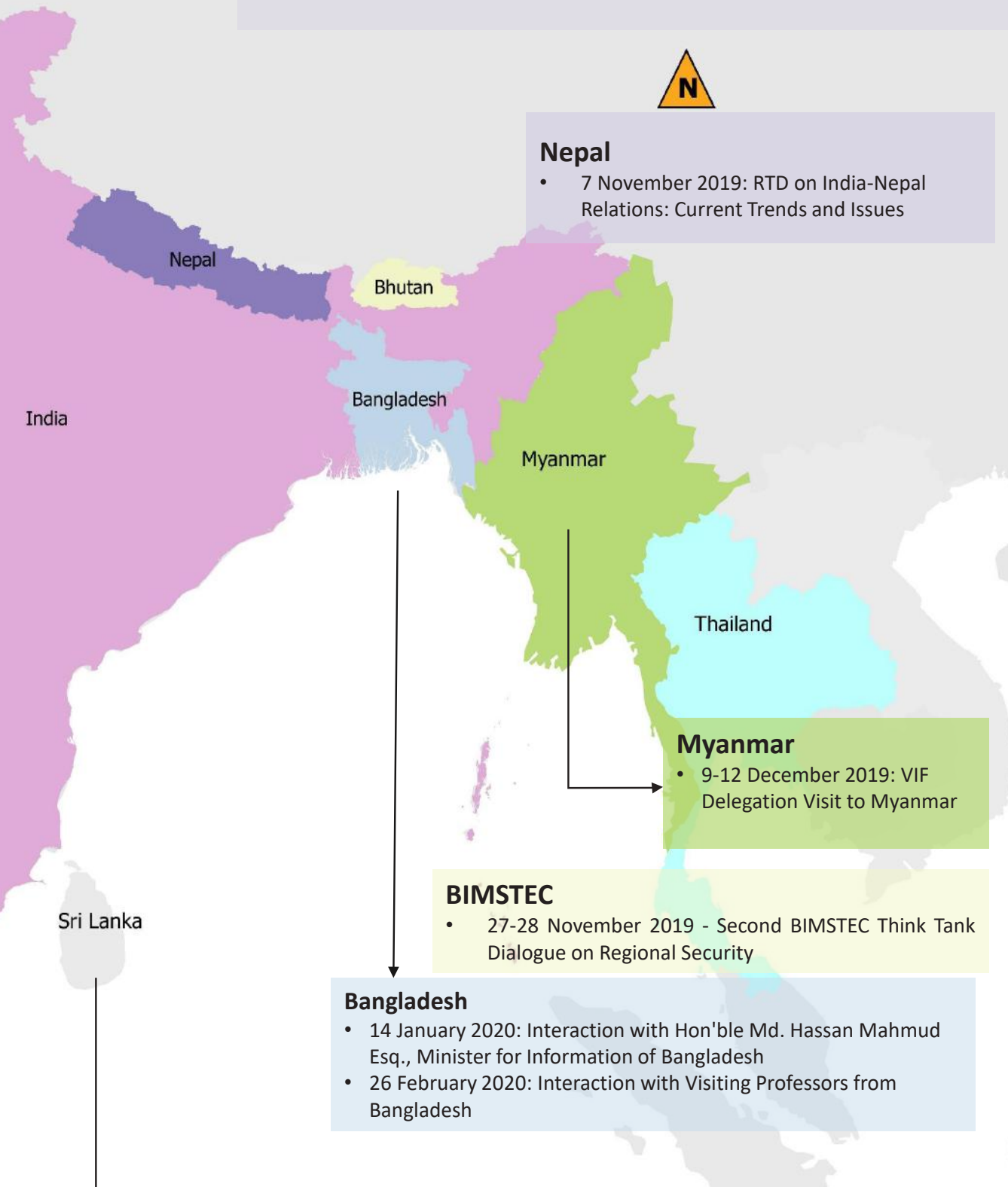
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# **Neighbourhood Studies**



# Centre for Neighbourhood Studies



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## Glimpses



## Focus on BIMSTEC

The focus of Centre for Neighbourhood Studies this year was on all the contemporary events and more so on regionalism. Given India's interest in strengthening the BIMSTEC process, apart from hosting the second BIMSTEC security dialogue, which was attended by 28 participants from all the BIMSTEC member countries including three representatives of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, the VIF published two sets of report on BIMSTEC, including a brief actionable report and a more detailed Outcome Document was prepared following the earlier practice at the VIF. This apart, *National Security* Vol. III Issue (January-March 2020) was devoted to examining the various perspectives on the BIMSTEC from within the region. They raise and answer many important questions. The essays and articles fill a genuine need to have a more engaged discourse and a wider body of literature on the theme.

## Bangladesh

There were two sets of talks and discussions around them.

In January 2020 Md. Hassan Mahmud Esq. spoke on India - Bangladesh Relations. He emphasised India's role during the time of Bangladesh's independence and how the relationship between the two immediate neighbours has shaped over a period of time and underlined the important historical relations shared by the two countries. He also raised concerns over how the benefits of close cooperation and interaction were not yet tapped to its fullest potential.

In February 2020 talks were delivered by Prof Rounaq Jahan and Prof Rehman on *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance*. Prof Rounaq Jahan gave a detailed account of the promises made by Bangladesh and the expectations within and outside the country. She emphasised on the fact that the emergence

of Bangladesh was unique because it was the first case of successful emergence of state based on linguistic nationalist movement in the postcolonial scenario. The problem of corruption and governance were highlighted by Prof Rehman Shoban. He also elaborated on the other various dimensions in the political and economic developments of the country.

## Nepal

A Round Table Discussion on India-Nepal relations with special focus on China was held on 7th November 2019. The discussion revolved around Nepal-China ties, and how that was affecting India's interest. Nepal-Sino everlasting friendship is now also being called a 'strategic partnership'. India's need to balance out the pressure and leverage more effective measures with Nepal were discussed at length.

## Maldives

The VIF hosted an interaction with a delegation of journalism students from the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) in July 2019. The delegation was led by Mr Ahmed Saleem, Dean of the Islamic University. The discussion was informative and indicative of strengthening relations between the two nations. Amongst other issues, the delegation also highlighted the presence of the Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping purposes in the Maldives. The visiting delegation concluded by reiterating their goals of exploring diverse cultural and democratic values to aid their training in the field of journalism.

## Sri Lanka

A round table discussion was held on May 16, 2019 to discuss the Easter terror attacks in Sri Lanka. The participants discussed the question about the revival of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) and other prominent threats for Sri Lanka at present. It was

believed that Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or the Islamic State (ISIS, IS) found Sri Lanka as a soft target and caught them with their guards down to leverage the alienated and radicalised Muslim population, even by aiming the attacks at populous locations like hotels and churches. According to the participants, by endorsing more Sufism in the country, as suggested by many, they would only be further alienating the very segment of the population which was susceptible to radicalisation or extremist messages. The need was to counter the messages on social media by our own messages. It was suggested India should increase its engagement with Sri Lanka.

## Myanmar

Significant traction was gained in our study of Myanmar with MoUs being signed with two important think tanks in Myanmar viz. the Myanmar Institute of Peace and Security and the ThayNinGa Institute of Strategic Studies. Both these institutes are reputed names in Myanmar's strategic community with the former maintaining the country's best conflict management database. In December 2019, a five-member delegation led by Director VIF, visited the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies, the National Defence College Nay Pyi Taw and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Representatives from three reputed think tanks of Myanmar had also joined the VIF deliberations during the BIMSTEC Conference in November 2019.

This period also saw the commencement of a Myanmar Monthly Round Up of analysis of open source English media on Myanmar. In addition, a number of articles, commentaries and a VIF Paper covered the events in Myanmar including the United Nations sanctions against Myanmar; the case against Myanmar w.r.t the Rohingyas at the International Court of Justice; the visit by President Xi Jinping to

Myanmar in January 2020 and the visit of the Myanmar President to India in February 2020.

In 2020-21 the Centre proposes to publish two Books titled 'Making Northeast a stakeholder in Act East Policy' & 'BIMSTEC: Reflections from Members'.

## Afghanistan-Pakistan cluster

During the past year, India's relation with Pakistan has been turbulent. The decision of the Indian government to go ahead with the *Balakot* strikes in February 2019 and revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 pushed the Imran Khan government on the back-foot at domestic as well as international levels. Pakistan's desperate attempts to rally support against India on these issues found no resonance among the international community.

The year 2019 proved challenging for India's Afghanistan policy primarily because of the rapidly shifting US policy towards the country. The signing of the withdrawal deal between the US and the Taliban indicates tough times ahead for Afghanistan and its people. The agreement provides a narrow window of opportunity for the Afghans to negotiate peace with an insurgent group which hasn't shown any tangible indications of power-sharing in a democratic system. Any development in Afghanistan has a direct impact on the security and stability of the whole region. India with a significant stake in the stability of Afghanistan has been watching the developments in the country very closely. At this point, it is crucial to ensure that the Taliban doesn't become the only dominant force in Afghanistan and the gains made in the last 18 years are not entirely lost. India's strategic interest and its national security are closely aligned with a stable, secure, and democratic Afghanistan.

During the year 2019-20, apart from producing several articles and commentaries on the

developments in the region, Afghanistan-Pakistan cluster at VIF also held regular meetings of Pakistan Study Group (PSG). PSG discussed various burning issues pertaining to the developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some of these issues include Kartarpur modalities, Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, the Afghan peace process, Economic turbulence in Pakistan, FATF issue, civil-military relations in Pakistan, US resolution on Masood Azhar in UNSC, Developments in Jammu and Kashmir after the revocation of Article 370 and Pakistan's strategy for UNHRC and UNGA, Pakistan-China relations, the extension of General Bajwa and its impact on the civil-military relationship. The Pakistan Study Group under VIF brought out the first edited book titled 'Pakistan Insights 2019' in which various members of the study group contributed chapters. The PSG is working towards bringing out the second edited volume titled 'Pakistan Insights 2020'.

In August 2019, VIF also organised a discussion on India's policy options in Afghanistan, where scholars deliberated on some critical questions about the possibility of a deal between the US and the Taliban, nature of such an agreement, and whether it will bring stabilization or more chaos in the country. The scholars also brainstormed on how such a deal will impact the nature of India's involvement in Afghanistan. Several policy recommendations came out after the discussions.

In March 2020, in collaboration with the China cluster under VIF, the Afghanistan-Pakistan cluster organised a Round Table discussion on China-Pakistan nexus. The discussion on this topic was critical, especially in the background of rapidly changing geopolitical scenario. The China-Pakistan nexus has been building up over decades since the 1960s. While some in India have down played the strength of the Chinese commitment to Pakistan, the history of these relations reveals a different picture. The Chinese have

been deterred in the past by a conjecture of external forces, but today, those constraints no longer operate. The 2005 China-Pakistan Treaty of Friendship, cooperation and neighbourly relations symbolizes the strategic and economic commitment of China to Pakistan's security. The renewed interest of the US in Pakistan primarily because of the peace process in Afghanistan may also be a matter of concern for India in the coming years. The round table deliberated upon some critical questions such as how does China-Pakistan military cooperation as well as weapons systems/ connected technology transfers, affect India's National security?; what is the level of nuclear transfer/cooperation between China and Pakistan?; and will the increasing US proximity with Pakistan, in the backdrop of the peace process in Afghanistan, have an impact on China-Pakistan Relations? The round table resulted in several policy recommendations.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 16 May 2019: Round Table Discussion on Sri Lanka: Reeling Under the Attack

A round table discussion was held at the VIF to discuss the recent terror attacks in Sri Lanka. The discussants included Major General Ashok Mehta, Dr Adil Rashid, Dr Smruti Pattanaik, Prof S D Muni, Dr Sreeradha Datta, Ambassador Anil Wadhwa and Professor Sujit Dutta. The Muslim alienation was traced back to the days of LTTE, suggesting that this fault-line between Singhalese and National Tawheed Jamath (NTJ) was further fuelled by the Rohingya crisis. There has always been an over focus on LTTE in Sri Lanka. It was felt that the terror programme of SAARC has been effective by far but definitely needs more and a strong bilateral framework. BIMSTEC, on the other hand, might be too loose a framework for the requisite actions

## 5 July 2019: Interaction with a Delegation from Maldives

VIF hosted an interaction with delegation of journalism students from the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) led by Mr Ahmed Saleem, Dean of the Islamic University. The VIF was represented by the Director of the VIF.

The delegation highlighted the presence of the Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping purposes in the Maldives, and took the opportunity to express commitment of providing training to aid and empower its neighbouring countries. The discussion was informative and indicative of strengthening relations between the two nations.

## 24-25 September 2019: RISS-VIF Dialogue on Afghanistan

The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS), Moscow, hosted the VIF at Moscow on 24-25 September 2019, for a two-day Conference on 'Afghanistan Crisis and the Problems of its Settlement: Prospects of Russia-India Cooperation in Afghanistan';

The discussions recognized that the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan affects all regional countries and stakeholders. It was essential to get all regional stakeholders on board for the promotion of useful cooperation for stabilizing Afghanistan especially when the US is looking at complete withdrawal. It was also noted that Taliban had not shown any desire to bring peace to Afghanistan and has continued to inflict violence randomly while engaging in high visibility 'peace talks'. It was also clear that the year-long engagement that USA had with the Taliban had not met any success yet, but there was hope that the paused efforts may restart soon. Also, the threat of terrorism and drug trade was affecting both Russia and

India alike. These threats will persist till Afghanistan remains in turmoil, and acts as a magnet for terrorists from around the world, particularly from the Syrian theatre. There are signs that some elements have already moved, and more may join.

It was also underlined that both for Russia and India interests of the Afghan people was paramount and therefore needed to be freed from interference from neighbours as well as the influence of foreign fighters that are joining the Islamic State, which has taken roots in Afghanistan. Principally, the Taliban would need to show flexibility and work towards peace rather than focus on gaining power. There are apprehensions that Taliban may eventually seek a monopoly on power in Afghanistan. Alternate scenarios such as no-deal exit was also evaluated along with the possible role of other regional organizations such as the SCO.

The Russian and Indian position on terrorism is unambiguous and is spelled out in the Russia-India joint statement issued at Vladivostok on 5 September 2015. They have supported the Bishkek declaration of the SCO and the work of the SCO's Afghanistan contact group. It was also underlined that any peace deal should include guarantees that are verifiable and a strong commitment to the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF). A ceasefire by Taliban would be welcome signal of its true intentions.

It was felt that given the inclusive and participative nature of the Moscow format of intra-Afghan talks, this process needs to be continued and strengthened. Peace needs to be given a chance based on the dictum that "bad talks are better than a good war". In order to do that, both the warring sides have to show equal measure of commitment. The regional stakeholders need to play a supportive and constructive role in forging intra-Afghan unity.

## 7 November 2019: Discussion on India-Nepal Relations

The India-Nepal relations improved after BIMSTEC became instrumental in providing new avenues to build sub-regional relationships. Chinese influence has been growing in Nepal with an increase in financial aid and investments. To maintain advantageous position, it was suggested that India should treat Nepal like any other neighbour and listen to their concerns. India needs to work it out in a manner which is beneficial to both – India and Nepal. There is a need for positive engagement.

India has a genuine upfront open policy of a friendly approach towards Nepal, which must be maintained. India should invest more on the soft power diplomacy with Nepal and cultivate people in academia, arts, media and opinion leaders and establish cultural links. The issues related to rivers needs to be solved and the increasing presence of NGOs in Nepal should also be looked into.

## 27-28 November 2019: Second BIMSTEC Think Tanks Conference

VIF hosted the Second Edition of the BIMSTEC Think-Tanks Conference in New Delhi. The BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is a regional multilateral organisation founded in 1997 and comprises the seven littorals of the world's largest bay viz. the Bay of Bengal.

The littorals i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand have around 1.5 billion people, approximately 22% of the world population and a combined GDP of \$ 2.7 trillion with a growth rate of approximately 6.5 %. The two-day conference had total 28 participants from all the BIMSTEC nations (excluding India) which included

three representatives of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, and participants from different think-tanks, academia and Armed Forces.

Over the two days the discussions focussed on (i) 'Internet and social media as a tool for radicalisation- the BIMSTEC experience and way forward'; (ii) 'Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in BIMSTEC'; (iii) 'Environment and Climate Change: Preserving Mountains and Oceans Ecosystem'; (iv) 'Restructuring Institutions: Cooperation and Capacity Building within BIMSTEC States'; and, (v) 'Cyber Security: Need for Cooperation Between the BIMSTEC States to Counter-Cyber Security Threats'.

Director VIF emphasised on the need to develop the Maritime and Cyber laws among the BIMSTEC countries. BIMSTEC Secretary-General mentioned transnational crimes as major threat to all BIMSTEC member States. The BIMSTEC nations must emphasise on Maritime Security in the light of socio-economic development. The BIMSTEC leaders must understand about preserving biodiversity to avoid environmental degradation and to promote sustainable development.

In his inaugural address, the Chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board, Amb P S Raghavan, stated that the economic prospects of BIMSTEC are closely related to North-East India's economy, and a robust approach is needed for integrating the North-Eastern parts of the region with other BIMSTEC member States. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's various initiatives to ensure security in Indo-Pacific region, he emphasised that India was willing to lead the way in Maritime Security and Disaster Management. Amb Raghavan also suggested that the BIMSTEC should discuss Indo-Pacific and the initiative should be taken up by the strategic community to discuss the prospects of it. He supported the idea of including Indonesia in BIMSTEC which should be

seriously considered due to its position connecting the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. On countering the 5G technology import from China, Amb Raghavan mentioned that skill trainings are much needed for the personnel to contain cyber security threats. The BIMSTEC States should cooperate on software building to support 5G technology rather than being bogged down by the US-China technology conflict. It was felt that the BIMSTEC created software would have immense potential to meet our technological needs.

### **9-12 December 2019: VIF Delegation visit to Myanmar**

A delegation from VIF led by its Director and comprising of Lt Gen Ravi Sawhney, Amb Gautam Mukhopadhyay, Dr Sreeradha Datta and Col Jaideep Chanda visited Myanmar from 9 – 12 December 2019.

The delegation interacted with the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) and discussed in detail the Rohingya crisis, Myanmar's strategy to resolve the Rohingya situation through a comprehensive plan, and the India-Myanmar relations. The return of the Rohingyas was one of the issues, their resettlement and livelihood options needed attention too. An observation on the democratic transition from the military dominated one to a civilian one through more reforms; rooting out corruption and work towards peace for the whole of Myanmar was also made.

Interactions were held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with officers dealing with India at the foreign office. The interactions were fruitful and the need for enhanced people to people contact was an important takeaway. Interactions were also held with the members of the Indo-Myanmar Chambers of Commerce, the Commandant of the National Defence College, Myanmar Institute of Peace and Security

(MIPS), Thayninga Institute of Strategic Studies (TISS) and the Institute for Strategy and Policy – Myanmar (ISP Myanmar) and representatives of a few Indian Public Sector Units. It was felt that the role of academia and civil society in addressing outstanding issues remain significant for both India and Myanmar.

### **14 January 2020: Interaction with Md. Hassan Mahmud Esq., Minister for Information of Bangladesh**

Md. Hassan began by emphasising India's role during the time of Bangladesh's independence and how the relationship between the two immediate neighbours has shaped over the period of time. He particularly emphasised the years since 2009 as the golden phase of interaction and cooperation between the two countries especially under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and PM Sheikh Hasina.

Md. Hassan underlined the important historical relations shared by the two countries, but also raised concerns over how the benefits of close cooperation and interaction were not yet tapped to its fullest potential. The need to create new channels of communication to translate the goodwill between the two governments across the people was brought out. The successful deployment of South Asian Satellite was one such positive development. It was observed that both India and Bangladesh could seek new areas of cooperation to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals.

### **26 February 2020: Interaction with Visiting Professors from Bangladesh**

Prof Rounaq Jahan began her talk by giving a detailed account of the promises made by Bangladesh and the expectations within and outside the country. She emphasised on the fact that the emergence of Bangladesh was unique because it was the first case

of successful emergence of a state based on linguistic nationalist movement in the postcolonial scenario. She highlighted that to understand the political developments in Bangladesh, it is important to understand the nine months of the liberation struggle, which left a deep impact on its trajectory.

Prof Rehman Sobhan spoke about the brief political history of how Bangladesh was formed and how he was part of the political debate since the 1950s. He explained the economic story of Bangladesh, which had to go through periods of instabilities since the mid-80s. The process of economic development in Bangladesh started and accelerated in the '90s. He gave the example of the ready-made garments where Bangladesh has now become the second-largest exporter in the world. He gave a detailed account of each sector of the economy from agriculture to the industrial sector, pharmaceutical industry, cement and construction industry, steel industries and so on.

The discussion opened new dimensions to understand the relations in South Asia with the increasing participation of the Chinese and what role Chinese investments play in Bangladesh. Concerns were also raised about the two-party politics and whether there is a scope of any new party adding to the political mix.

## 16 March 2020: Discussion on China-Pakistan Nexus

The discussants were of the view that the China-Pakistan alliance started in the military sphere and transcended to other aspects of the relations. Earlier, the Chinese were mindful of Indian sensitivities but now they have abandoned it, by raising the Kashmir issue in United Nation Security Council (UNSC), again and again.

The discussants expounded that the CPEC had no economic logic. The first phase of the project was complete and now the second phase of the project was being finalised. The first phase was essentially about the electricity project and the railway lines. The rate at which the electricity was sold and the subsequent circular debt of the project was astounding. The second phase was mostly marked by development of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) but the details were still not clear.

The discussants examined the fact that no amount of 'talking to the Taliban' was going to make them any more accepting of India, certainly not while they remained in the thrall of Pakistan's ISI. Pakistan is not going to leave Afghanistan so easily. India needs to do a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities and threat) analysis of its options in Afghanistan.

An education of the brain that uprooted humility  
and took away tenderness would be no true  
education at all.

**- Sister Nivedita**



# **National Security & Strategic Studies**

## Glimpses



The Centre for National Security and Strategic Studies during the year 2019-2020 carried out significant activities under the assigned charter. Along with generating Bi-Weekly News Digest which covers the essential developments in Defence, and Terrorism (National & International), the centre focused on the dynamic issues related to the spread of Islamist extremism in India and globally, developments in the Left-Wing Extremism, and the significant and crucial developments in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

VIF jointly with the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) had organised the 3rd edition of Homeland Security Conference focusing on Cyber Crime Management. The event witnessed the participation of distinguished experts from academia, law enforcement, security establishments and the corporate houses.

The centre organised discussions focusing on Jammu & Kashmir (J&K): the Big Picture, and a session on Neutralising the 'Idea of Azadi' in J&K. Scholars attached to the Centre produced several publications analysing the on-going developments, especially the significant ones such as Abrogation of Article 370. Commentaries on Opinion on India-Pakistan Confrontation, Pulwama's Aftermath and Pakistani Reaction, India's Post-Pulwama Response, Special Provisions for Jammu and Kashmir: Facts, New Breed of Kashmiri Terrorists, Burhan Wani and Rise in Militancy in South Kashmir, Lead Role of J&K Police, Synergy in Anti-Terrorist Operations, Three Cheers-Jammu and Kashmir is Truly Integrated with India, Kargil War: Recollections were written during the year.

The Centre also organised brainstorming sessions and discussions with experts to understand the spread of Islamist radicalisation and extremism in India. Focusing on the issues related to Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), the Centre organised a discussion

on the Maoist problem: Current Trends and Issues in which the discussants analysed the on-going Maoist conflict along with data and trends. This led to the creation of the VIF Task Force on LWE headed by Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee. The Centre also organised a brainstorming session on the Islamic State and the dynamics of international terrorism. The Centre will keep focusing on similar trends and issues concerning India's security during 2020-21.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 20 June 2019: VIF Capsule for Defence Attache Designates

The VIF organised a one-day capsule for India's Defence Attache designates who have been assigned to various Indian Embassies abroad.

Amb TCA Raghavan, Director General Indian Council of World Affairs spoke on 'Fundamentals of India's Foreign Policy'. He gave an overview of India's relations with Big Powers besides enunciating India's foreign policy principles. To acquaint the DAs with their tasks at the missions abroad Lt. Gen. Anil Ahuja, former Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff (Policy Planning and Force development) briefed them on 'Future of India's Defence Diplomacy'. The next session was devoted to 'India and its Neighbourhood' which included briefings on political, security and economic situation there and relations with India. Amb Ashok Kantha spoke on relations with China, Nepal and Sri Lanka; Amb Rajiv Bhatia gave an overview on Myanmar; Amb VP Haran talked about Bhutan while Amb Veena Sikri recounted situation in Bangladesh.

Shri Sushant Sareen talked about situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Finally, Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, former C-in-C of Eastern Naval and Western

Naval Commands briefed the DAs on 'Understanding the Relevance of Indo-Pacific'.

### **22-23 August 2019: Homeland Security Conference 2019 on Innovation led Cyber Security Management jointly organised by the VIF and the FICCI**

The conference was attended by officials from the Indian Government, industry experts, academicians, and researchers from various organisations. Discussions focused around effective management of cyber-crime and cyber security in India.

It was noted that big data is growing at an exponential rate. Around 97 percent of organisations around the world are investing in AI and Big Data. Out of the whole volume of data, 40 percent goes up to the Cloud Services. The rise in volume of un-structured data from the IoT (Internet of Things), the social media and other sources, is another critical issue that requires immediate address. The phenomenon of cyber governance was picked out as a critical and important component of the National Security Strategy.

The conference concluded with the suggestion that the government and industry must constantly and jointly address the new vulnerabilities, threats and risks to secure the information systems on a real-time basis. Training and awareness on the latest-trends of cyber security and cyber-crime investigation should be provided to the Law Enforcement Agency officials to tackle cyber-crime effectively. There should be a

verification process mechanism for social-media and mobile networking applications, which warns the citizens and makes them aware of the implications of fake news.

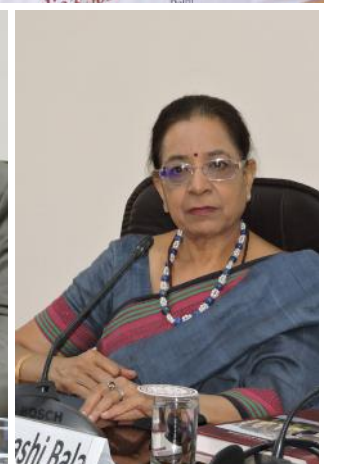
### **20 February 2020: Interaction on ISIS**

The Islamic State (hereafter IS)/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Daesh is a transnational terrorist organisation which is based on the ideology of fundamentalism and Salafism teachings of Islam towards the creation and establishment of the Caliphate. From IS's emergence in 2014 to its eclipse by the beginning of 2019, the IS remained a terrorist organisation for its mass of foreign terrorist fighters from every corner of the world and its modus operandi. The 'hunting down' of IS's self-declared leader and Caliph— Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October 2019 has certainly blurred the IS's vision of 2020 Caliphate encompassing half of the world. However, the decentralisation of IS as an organisation raises a concern of lone-wolf attacks by sympathisers in their homeland. To understand the dynamics behind the emergence and fall-out of IS and its future, the VIF organised an interaction with Shri Mayank Sharma, Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Southern Command), Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India. The interaction traced the history or chronology of IS as an organisation, how it conceals the roots of international terrorism, how religious scriptures are misused to radicalise the young minds and a brief understanding of mobilisation of women as jihadi brides of IS fighters.



# **Historical & Civilisational Studies**

## Glimpses



## Samvad

The first edition of Samvad, a three-day global conclave titled *Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness* was organised in New Delhi by the VIF, in collaboration with the Tokyo Foundation and the IBC on September 3-4, 2015. The conclave was inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of highlighting India's civilizational links to the world. Not only did the Prime Minister inaugurate the conclave in Delhi but he also went to Bodh Gaya along with the delegates to offer special prayers for global peace and harmony at the Mahabodhi temple, Buddhism's holiest shrine. A pre-recorded message from Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was also played during the inaugural session of the conference. Delegates from over 15 countries, including Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Japan, Taiwan, and a few European countries, among others, participated in the conference. A Bodhgaya Declaration was adopted.

Samvad II was held at Sitagu International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Yangon, Myanmar on August 5-6, 2017. For Samvad II, the VIF partnered with SIBA a Premier Buddhist institution, the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) and The Japan Foundation. The two-day deliberations culminated with adoption of Yangon Declaration. In all, over 100 speakers addressed the gathering and presented their papers. The diversity of perspectives and views shared during the presentations and deliberations indicated the openness and deep desire for a dialogue beyond the tokenism that most inter-faith and peace initiatives have been reduced to. Despite different perspectives, all converged on finding a common ground for sustainable peace. The proceedings of the first Samvad conference were also released.

The Japan leg of the initiative was carried forward through the Symposia on *Shared Values and Democracy in Asia* and was held in Tokyo in 2016 and 2018 and was organised by The Japan Foundation, Nakamura Hajime Eastern Institute and Nikkei Corporation in collaboration with the VIF.

In September 2019, Samvad III was organised in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. VIF partnered with the Gandan Thegchenling Monastery – a Centre of Mongolian Buddhists, Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), Institute of Strategic Studies, Mongolia, the Japan Foundation and International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). Buddhist Spiritual Masters, Scholars, Policy Influencers from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Russia, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan participated in Samvad III along with the Mongolian and the Indian side. The Prime Minister of Mongolia represented the Mongolian side. Proceedings of Samvad II was released by His Eminence Khamba Lama, the Supreme Monk of Gandan Monastery of Mongolia.

## India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

Since the overwhelming success of the International Day of Yoga, it has been felt that it is now time to mobilise our ancient resources of ideas and bring them to practical and strategic use to build an Indian narrative. It is important to recognise these components of India's soft power and international cultural diplomacy as vital strategic asset. With this end in mind, the VIF instituted a flagship seminar series with the umbrella term *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. The first seminar in this series—*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Relevance of India's Ancient Thinking to Contemporary Strategic Reality*—was organised in January 2019. In 2020, the second edition was held on 3 & 4 March

and was titled *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Revisited: Exploring India's Soft Power Assets*. Distinguished scholars from various disciplines like Philosophy, History, Science, Religious Studies, Strategic Studies, Political Science and International Relations, and senior diplomats participated in the conference. This year, there were presentations on different soft power assets of India, like philosophy, art, science, grammar, religious diversity and pluralism, and *dharma*. There were two brainstorming sessions—one on Hindu Studies Abroad and another on India's Soft Power Projection.

The proceedings of last year's conference were also released in the form of the edited volume: *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Relevance of India's Ancient Thinking to Contemporary Strategic Reality*.

## VIF Series History of Ancient India

The *History of Ancient India* series was conceptualised in 2010 to address the need of providing a fresh and objective perspective on ancient Indian history and civilisation. These volumes are intended to serve as authoritative reference books, where an interested reader would find the most comprehensive knowledge related to various aspects of ancient Indian history. Volumes I to VII were released in the last couple of years. Under the editorship of Prof Dilip K. Chakrabarti, volume VIII of the series was released in March 2020. The volume deals with Sculpture, Painting, Terracottas, Performing Arts and Architecture. The VIF proposes to bring out the remaining volumes (IX to XI) in the next two years.

## Lecture Series: India-China Cultural Linkages

As part of the lecture series on India-China Cultural linkages, Dr Shashi Bala, Dean at the Centre for Indology of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan delivered lectures

on 'The Role of the Buddhist Master Kumarajiva in India-China Relations' on 'Faith and Empire-Tombs to Temples in China', on 'Buddhist Monasteries and Temples in Ancient Capitals of China', 'Cave Temples in China' and on 'Indian Impact on Chinese Art'.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 15 April 2019: The Role of the Buddhist Master Kumarajiva in India-China Relations

Dr Shashibala, Dean at the Centre of Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi, spoke on 'The Role of the Buddhist Master Kumarajiva in Indo Chinese Relations'. Director VIF chaired the proceedings. This discussion was envisioned to bring out the contribution of Buddhist scholar Kumarajiva in shaping and instituting India's image as a universal cultural leadership and how it has contributed to India-China relations.

Recounting the contribution of Kumarajiva in India-China relations, Dr Shashibala articulated that there were more than 250 Indians and around 100 Chinese masters who disseminated Buddhism to East Asia. Among them Dharmaraksa, Kumarajiva and Hsuan-tsang are the three who stand out by their preeminent virtue and for spreading the subtle philosophical systems of Buddhism. Buddhist scholars like Kumarajiva spread Indian culture and because of his efforts we can proudly say that India was the cultural leader of the world. Unfortunately, in India Kumarajiva's life and legacy has gone into amnesia but is kept alive reverentially in East Asian countries.

### 24 May 2019: Faith and Empire-Tombs to Temples in China

This discussion underlined that the concept of other world or life after death was predominant in China among the rulers and the nobles. But they

also followed the core Buddhist philosophy that lays emphasis on ‘this worldliness’. This concept has developed from building Tombs to Monasteries with the arrival of Buddhism in Ancient China mainly in Xia’n, the ancient Capital of China which was a centre of learning for Buddhist philosophers and monks.

Dr Shashibala said that the Chinese Emperors believed in longevity and immortality which was impossible to attain. Therefore, they built tombs with all the luxury and extravagance of royalty buried beneath them. Terracotta images of different types of warriors, horse, chariots etc. have also been unearthed from some of the ancient Chinese sites which support the concept of other worldliness. But as soon as Buddhism reached China, these emperors began to build monasteries and enshrined them with beautiful statues and painted the interiors exquisitely to convey the philosophy of life as Buddha never talked about the other world or life after death.

### 3 June 2019: Buddhist Monasteries and Temples in Ancient Capitals of China

In her presentation, Dr Shashibala emphasised on the prominence of Buddhist Temples and Monasteries as centres of learning in Ancient China. There are traditionally four historical capitals of China, collectively referred to as the “Four Great Ancient Capitals of China”. These four are Beijing, Nanjing, Luoyang and Xi’an (also known as Chang’an). Buddhist temples and monasteries have survived in large numbers in these ancient Chinese cities because of the royal patronage under which they flourished as the centre of Buddhists learning. Dr Shashibala said that Chinese temples and monasteries were quite similar to the Chinese palaces in their styles and architectural details because they were primarily built by the emperors in order to receive Buddhists scholars and monks who travelled to ancient China. The

sculptures, paintings, scriptures etc. in these Buddhist temples, show sheer emphasis on wisdom, because the Chinese Emperors had not only considered these temples and monasteries as the places of Dharmodaya (religious) but also a place of Gyanodaya (learning). Buddhist monasteries in Khotan are considered to be the most significant centre of Gyanodaya. Manuscripts have also been preserved in these temples which made them very significant from the historical point of view.

### 12 September 2019: Talk on Cave Temples in China

Dr Shashibala, while explaining the importance of the caves said that the caves were a great source of historical evidences. The earliest reference to a cave is found in *Rigveda* followed by *Atharvaveda* and *Shatapatha Brahmana*. A number of inscriptions and paintings found inside these caves give a clear understanding of socio-cultural, religious, economic and political conditions of a historical era. These caves were primarily carved out to be used for the meditation of the Buddhist monks. China has a number of cave complexes. These caves were highly regarded as a place of meditation and knowledge not only in ancient India but also in China. The style and technology used in the caves at *Kucha*, *Kizil* or *Dunhuang* evolved gradually in a sense of having greater Indian influence in its earlier phases to indigenisation in later phase.

### 20 September 2019: Interaction with His Eminence Khamba Lama Gabju Choijamts Demberel

His Eminence Khamba Lama, the Supreme Monk of Mongolia blessed the VIF team during his State visit to India. He spoke on the cultural linkages between Mongolia and India. He conveyed his happiness for being able to partner with the VIF in hosting Samvad

III at the Gandan Monastery in early September 2019.

He reiterated that India and Mongolia have a common link in Buddha and India and Mongolia are spiritual brother nations.

### **6 November 2019: Talk on Indian Impact on Chinese Art**

Dr Sashibala stated that when Buddhism reached China, a clear shift from building tombs to erecting temples, monasteries, stupas etc. was noticeable in archaeological sources. Before Buddhism reached China, Chinese arts were more of existential nature than being transcendental. She emphasised on the philosophical importance of these sculptures inside the caves in China.

Caves in China are mainly situated along the ancient Silk Route through which Buddhism and Buddhist philosophies travelled from India to China and further to other places of the world. India is the spiritual leader of the world and Indian impact in China's Buddhist art and architecture is a fine example of it.

### **9 January 2020: Talk by Ambassador Basant Gupta on Spirituality and International Politics: India's Role**

Amb Basant Gupta spoke about the Bhagavad Gita. He said the beauty of the Gita is in the fact that it brings out the divine wisdom of our scriptures from its exclusivity and makes it available to the ordinary men, living their daily lives in the world. The Gita tells us that the sacred knowledge is for all of us. The Gita's timeless appeal are emphasised by its total avoidance of dogma and bigotry.

The Gita tells us that there is no greater victory in the life of a human being than victory over the mind. What would always be relevant is Sri Krishna's

simple but profound advice to Arjuna that a man who renounces the fruits of action, and acts only for God, is a man of renunciation and not a warrior who runs away from the battlefield.

The Gita's core message is that in order to be happy under all circumstances, one should be totally fearless in doing one's duty. Amb Gupta pointed out that the great discovery of India was the truth of existential unity, articulated by the expression *ekam sat*.

### **24 February 2020: Book Discussion on Dilip Chakrabarti's Ancient Rajasthan**

On 24 February 2020, VIF organised a book discussion on Prof Dilip K. Chakrabarti's latest book *Ancient Rajasthan: Research Development, Epigraphic Evidence on Political Power Centres, and Historical Perspectives* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International 2019). Prof Rupendra K. Chattopadhyay (Vivekananda Chair Professor of Social Science, University of Calcutta), Dr Radha Madhav Bharadwaj (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, University of Delhi), and Dr Birendra Nath Prasad (Jawaharlal Nehru University) were the discussants.

The first part of the book deals with the historiography of Rajasthan since the time of James Tod till around 1950. In the second chapter, the author traces the history of Rajasthan from the beginning of the historical period till around 700 AD. The third chapter is about the light the evidence of inscriptions throws on the political power centres of Rajasthan from the Gupta period till the thirteenth century. The author argues that theories about Indian "feudalism", an "early medieval" phase in Indian history, and a mythical origin of the Rajputs are not supported by factual evidence on the ground. The inscriptional evidence suggests that the Rajputs were the direct descendants of the post-Gupta kings—a fact that has been largely ignored by present-day historians. As far

as the study of Rajasthan is concerned, Dr Chakrabarti is pained by the rather inconsistent and unsatisfactory historiography on post-Gupta Rajasthan, which neglects many of its hallmark features. Rather, he strongly advocates a data-centric approach towards the study of ancient Rajasthan. In general, he is critical of the trend in ancient Indian historical studies of first importing theoretical models from the history of Europe and then imposing them on Indian history with a total disregard for facts. When asked what could be an alternative to these theoretical frameworks, the author replied that one has to base the writing of history on one's findings on the ground. The discussants concluded that the book under discussion was itself of encyclopaedic proportions and should usher a new path of investigation into the history of Rajasthan.

### 3-4 March 2020: Seminar on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Revisited: Exploring India's Soft Power Assets

In January 2019, the VIF had organised the seminar *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Relevance of India's Ancient Thinking to Contemporary Strategic Reality* to mobilise the Indian repository of ideas—ancient and modern—and bring them to practical and strategic use in building an Indian narrative in today's world order. This is one of the flagship series of conferences instituted by the VIF. The second edition of the *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* seminar this year was held on March 3 and 4 and was titled *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Revisited: Exploring India's Soft Power Assets*. As the title suggests, the focus this year was on India's soft power assets and the role India is set out to play in the Asian 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The first session of the seminar was devoted to an exploration of India's soft power assets beyond the so-called assets "Yoga, Bollywood, Ayurveda and cuisine". While speaking about India's philosophical

contribution to humanity, Prof Shashi Prabha Kumar mentioned about the Rig Vedic aphorism *manurbhava* (be a human-being) which indicates that being born as a human is not enough, one has to become a human-being.

Prof Dilip Chakrabarti spoke about the influence of Indian art and sculpture on the architecture in South East Asia and West Asia. Prof M D Srinivas highlighted the difference between the Western paradigm of science and the ancient Indian one—the chief difference being that the former has been more absolutist while the latter more open-ended. Furthermore, the West has used scientific knowledge to control and exploit nature. Prof Amba Kulkarni explained why Panini's grammar is said to contain the germ of modern computational systems. Written in the style of an algorithm, Panini's grammars, as well as other Indian traditional grammars have been the basis of developing some modern-day computational systems.

In the afternoon session, Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe addressed the gathering as the Guest of Honour. He highlighted that Indian people are the bearers of India's soft power. The second session of the seminar focused on another wealth of India—religious pluralism and diversity. Prof Jeffery Long argued that the *ideal* of pluralism has been a prominent feature of discourse on religious diversity in India and that such ideas do matter. He said that India has produced numerous philosophical approaches to the diversity of views and practices, which, if implemented on a global scale, have the potential of mitigating conflict and promoting mutual understanding. Swami Narasimhananda highlighted that Swami Vivekananda had envisaged a religion that would not be limited by the constraints of place and time and would include all the features of the faith-systems that are prevalent till now and would have space for accommodating all

religious ideas that would come in the future.

The last session on March 3 was a special brainstorming session on Hindu Studies Abroad: Problems and Prospects. In recent times, concern has been raised over how Hinduism is studied in universities abroad and how it is portrayed generally in international academic circles. The aim of this session was to discuss the problems in this area and what we can do for a more objective process to take place. Prof Arvind Sharma gave a special address on the subject, which was followed by a brainstorming discussion by Ambassador Basant Gupta, Prof Jeffery Long and Swami Narasimhananda.

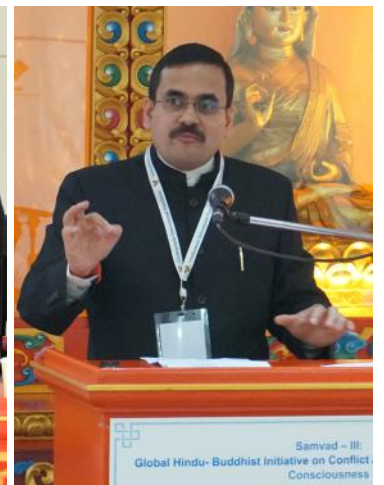
The first session of day two of the seminar was on *Dharma* and the difficulties associated with its application. *Dharma* has been a much-misunderstood word in the Anglophone world. Dr Saurabh Mishra explained the Indian idea of *Rajadharma* and concluded by saying that it is the classic *apad-dharma* (duty pertaining to exceptional or emergency times, hence duty that can violate some principles of *dharma* in order to protect higher principles). Col Pradeep Gautam presented on ethics in the *Thirukkural*, a text much neglected today but a highly influential and

important civilisational text of India. Gunjan Pradhan Sinha argued in her presentation that business and *dharma* cannot be mutually opposing if one follows the true definition of business as something that sustains and is sustainable (as opposed to a mere transaction in the economy).

The last session of the seminar was yet another brainstorming session on India's soft power projection. Eminent diplomats (former and present) participated in it to make it a stimulating debate. Ambassador Shashank reminded us that along with soft power, we cannot afford to ignore our hard power exercise as well. Ambassador Veena Sikri reiterated that the Ministry of External Affairs first needs to recognise soft power as a diplomatic asset. Dr Suresh Goel talked about developing Indian Chairs abroad for strengthening people-to-people contact. Ambassador Akhilesh Mishra also participated in the discussion in his individual capacity. He was the one to question the validity of Nye's concept of soft power in the Indian context, because India's end can never be what Nye had suggested—to get others to want what one wants. He instead proposed the term India's "instruments of influence."

## Samvad in Mongolia







## September 6 and 7, 2019: Samvad: Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative for Conflict Avoidance in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The inaugural session of Samvad III was dominated by the Buddhist spirit at its best with a large gathering participating in the rituals and opening of the gates of the new Gandan Monastery. The atmosphere was festive with colourful traditional arts and music at display. The music and dance bore a lot of resemblance to that of NE India. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador from Nepal, a Buddhist Nun, sang the Ganesh Stuti. Buddhist Spiritual Masters, Scholars, Policy Influencers from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Russia, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan participated in Samvad III along with the Mongolian and the Indian representatives.

The Prime Minister of Mongolia represented the Mongolian side.

Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi gave a special video message for the occasion.

Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman of the VIF and Ku Nivedita Bhide one of its trustees led the Indian delegation. Shri Sushil Modi, Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) & President, ICCR and Ladakh MP Shri Jamyang Tsering Namgyal were special nominees of the Prime Minister of India. Three eminent Indian religious and spiritual masters participated in the three-day proceedings: Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Sri Avedeshananda Giri ji Maharaj and Swami Mitrananda.

Dr Swapan Dasgupta, Member of Parliament (MP), Balbir Punj, Former MP and Dr Anirban Ganguly, Director-SPMRF spoke at various sessions and interacted with the Mongolian academia, civil society representatives and students.

The VIF organising team was headed by its Secretary Smt Anuttama Ganguly.

From the Japanese side besides the Shinto-Buddhist religious scholars, academicians and the Japanese Foundation officials, the Ambassador of Japan to Mongolia participated and read PM Abe's message.

Samvad III was divided in two parts, a Round Table of Religious and Spiritual Masters (RRT) and a parallel session on the aspects of Conflict Avoidance, Shared Values, Democracy and Environmental Consciousness.

The RRT is a path-breaking exercise which was introduced to carry forward the theme of *Conflict Avoidance* articulated in the concept paper of Samvad and was delivered as the keynote speech at Samvad I in 2015 at New Delhi by Shri S Gurumurthy.

The concept paper of Samvad I is founded on the Hindu-Buddhist dialogue discipline of *Tarka Shastra* and *Purva Paksha* as formulated by Hans Kung. It was during Samvad II held in Myanmar that the VIF thought it would be appropriate to start honest and open dialogue among faiths. In Samvad II, besides Hindu Buddhist spiritual masters, Muslims and Christian religious leaders also participated. They openly discussed the concept and terminology of one faith which could create apprehensions in the mind of the followers of other faiths. The leaders who participated in the discussions were very enthused by the format of the dialogue. After the Myanmar dialogue there was also a follow up discussion in India. These series of dialogues were conducted and moderated by Swami Mitrananda of Chinmaya Mission.

The Ulaanbaatar Samvad III took the concept to another level. Issues relating to the concept of Kafir, Jihad, Heathen, Crusade, Conversions were discussed in detail. The discussions touched upon the need for faiths to move away from **Only to Also**, and **Conversion to Conversation**. One of the important effects of the RRT in Myanmar was the message of Daw Aung San Sui Kyi, the State Counsellor of The Republic of the

Union of Myanmar to the Ulaanbaatar meet where she specifically said:

***“[S]ome of the responsible religionists do not take interest in imparting knowledge of the genuine knowledge of the genuine teachings shown by their respective religions. Moreover, some even lead their followers to the wrong way by means of instructing their bogus and insincere doctrines under the name of religion”***

The parallel technical sessions, the mainstay of the conference with the themes of *Shared Values, Democracy and Environmental Consciousness besides Conflict Avoidance* saw participation of a large number of spiritual masters, academics, thinkers, policy-makers and leaders.

The parallel sessions on both days had interesting themes, which essentially defined the deliberations and the sharing of views and experiences in *Samvad*. One session had as its theme, “Conflict Avoidance” and “Shared Values and Democracy in Asia”, while the other session had “Environment Consciousness” and “Conflict Avoidance.” These sessions saw as speakers members of Parliament from India, Sri Lanka and Mongolia, officials from various agencies and bodies of the United Nations such as UNDP and UNICEF, scholars from Bhutan, from Harvard University, from South Korea, from the National University of Mongolia the nodal social science research body in Mongolia Academy of Sciences. On day two, the environment and tourism Minister of Mongolia, Mr N Tserenbat delivered a special address and spoke on the “The Green Passport Campaign”, a very interesting and unique initiative in Mongolia to spread environmental consciousness, awareness, responsibility and sensitivity among citizens and especially the youth and children.

A number of ideas and themes were discussed, the vision of shared values, leadership, governance and

environmental conservation in Asia, the increasing and perennial relevance of Swami Vivekananda’s message especially in the context of conflict avoidance, the articulation of a narrative of a free and open Indo-Pacific, the need to address environmental challenges, challenges emanating from terrorism, from an increasing imbalance in our collective existence, the need for a new geo-strategic and cultural vision for the region, the 21<sup>st</sup> century being the Asian century with Buddha’s message being one of its defining cores and many such themes were discussed and deliberated upon. The transformative governance initiatives in India, their origin from the philosophy of compassion - *Karuna*, Prime Minister Modi’s efforts to transform India - through inclusion and empowerment, through peoples’ power and participation, the Indian approach to environmental consciousness, the works of Mongolian monks in environmental conservation were some of the topics that the speaker’s focused on.

The idea that along with rights, citizens globally need to be made aware of the concept of duties - that along with *Lokatantra - democracy*, there needed to be *Lokakartavya - duty* towards one’s society, milieu, people and country also came up in the discussions. The views that there can be no hegemony in terms of the flow of ideas, freedom of following one’s ways of life and worship and that Asia and the eastern wisdom - flowing from Buddhist and Hindu philosophies and traditions - *paramparas* - was emphasised and discussed. The perception was also that sharing of experience in terms of governance and environmental initiatives was essential for evolving and articulating a new narrative of engagement.

At the end of the two-day deliberations in Ulaanbaatar, a Declaration was adopted which captured the essence of the discussions at RRT and RTEC.

Our duty is to encourage everyone in his  
struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and  
strive at the same time to make the ideal as near  
as possible to the Truth.

**- Swami Vivekananda**



# **Governance & Political Studies**

## Glimpses



## Book Discussions

During the year, the Centre for Governance and Political Studies organised a number of book discussions on issues like Caste as Social Capital, PM Modi's governance and evolution of BJP under Mr Amit Shah among others.

Being election year, a number of talks were also held on General Election 2019.

## Workshops

In 2018, the VIF had organised the first of its kind *Certificate Programme* to bring together students from Indian Universities, academicians, researchers from think-tanks and other disciplines and introduced them to the conceptual frameworks and thought processes of India's strategic outlook. The second Certificate Programme was held on 7-9 August 2019. The workshop saw participation of about 60 people from all across the country. The audience comprised of a wide range of individuals, from university students to young professionals and from researchers in think tanks to serving officers from the Defence Services as well as Police and Judiciary.

The centre also conducted a two-day workshop on '*Indian Ethos in Management and Business*', on 18-19 September 2019. Shri Gurumurthy, Dr Rahul Varma, Prof Shashi Prabha Kumar, Dr P Kanagasabapathi, Shri P Satija, Dr Faizal Ahmad and Ms Gunjan Pradhan Sinha were the main speakers.

On 17 February 2020, a workshop for foreign diplomats posted in embassies based in New Delhi was organised. It was the second time this initiative was undertaken to bring together diplomats from countries around the world and introduce them to the conceptual frameworks and thought processes that define India's strategic outlook. The three-day

workshop saw participation of about 30 diplomats. The lectures were so designed, that each lecture/presentation were followed by a candid interaction with the participants to facilitate a mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 9 April 2019: Release of Book *Caste as a Social Capital*

'Caste as a Social Capital', revisiting caste as playing an important role in promoting economic growth, a book written by Professor R Vaidyanathan was released on 9 April 2019 at the VIF, New Delhi. The author is a distinguished economic thinker who retired as Professor of Finance at the IIM Bangalore. He is currently serving as a member of the National Security Advisory Board.

Commenting on the book, Director VIF said that while caste is commonly identified with oppression and discrimination, there are also positive aspects which are not adequately researched. Caste can also serve as a creator and promoter of social capital in the society. The book looks at the role of caste in promoting education, entrepreneurship and networking among individuals.

Shri S Gurumurthy began by emphasising that India has traditionally been an economy based on a communitarian production system. He said that he finds a complete alignment between caste and entrepreneurship in the country. One finds that both competition and collaboration moves simultaneously in a community. He said that when caste is looked at with a political lens, it is considered to be backward and discriminatory but it works well with economics. He added, "Caste and politics is a bad companion but caste and economics produces prosperity."

The author, while talking about his book, started by saying that the word, 'caste' has sadly assumed a problematic connotation in India, similar to the word 'holocaust' in Germany. He said that Caste was not an idea. Each caste is a 'sampradaya', which roughly translates to a tradition or a school of thought. He disagreed with the Nehruvian model which states that the government should do all business activities and recommended that it should be the society that carries out business activities. He suggests that the government should do only the job of a Kshatriya.

Dr Bibek Debroy in his address said the book presents a very strong and powerful hypothesis of seeing caste from the vantage point of economics. He said that what is intended while using the word 'caste' can mean differently for different people. It was much more about community, jati and family.

According to Dr A Surya Prakash the book makes very significant observation on clusters which are usually looked at superficially. He said that the book sheds light on the role of caste in promoting economic growth through business, entrepreneurship and commerce.

### **23 April 2019: Round Table Discussion on Elections 2019**

A round table discussion was held at the VIF to discuss the various aspects of Election 2019. Dr A Surya Prakash, the then Chairman Prasar Bharti, led the discussions.

The participants were of the view that solution to curb the use of money and reduce the influence of political families must be found. The Election Commission, which has vast power under Article 324 of the Constitution, must come down heavily to curb the prevailing malpractices in the elections.

### **20 May 2019: Round Table at the VIF on Elections 2019**

During the course of the elections, Dr A Surya Prakash visited the states of Karnataka, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to understand how the people were voting. He shared his impressions and insights during the round table discussion held at the VIF.

### **24 June 2019: Discussion on Emergency: Darkest Hour in Indian Democracy**

A discussion was held at the VIF on 24 June on the eve of 34 years since the declaration of the National Emergency in India.

The idea behind was to retell stories related to Emergency - considered as one of the darkest periods in the history of India's democracy. The discussion was carried out by a panel comprising of Dr A. Surya Prakash, Shri S Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF and Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF.

There are certain lessons we must learn from Emergency. First, we need towering people in every field. And an institution unmanned by towering people is of no use because its integrity and sanctity will never be upheld. Second, Shah Commission Report, to which hitherto, government had refused access, must be made available to be read in every library.

According to Shri Gurumurthy, "Unless Shah Commission Report is read, it will be difficult to understand what democracy means and what it means to lose it." He also called for a debate on the Shah Commission Report in New Delhi, wherein, judges, lawyers, politicians and intellectuals must come together and share opinions.

## 23 July 2019: Book Discussion on Amit Shah and the March of BJP

A discussion was held in the VIF with the authors of *Amit Shah and the March of BJP*, Dr Anirban Ganguly, and Shiwananda Dwivedi. The book is a chronicle of the political life and journey of the newly-appointed Home Minister of India, Shri Amit Shah, and narrates the account of how he led the party to its massive success as its chief.

Dr Arvind Gupta, in his welcome remarks, introduced the authors and spoke about the contemporary relevance of the book.

Dr Ganguly began the discussion by recalling how the authors were inspired to write the book while documenting Shah's tours across the country, when he had undertaken a plan to rejuvenate and restructure the party after assuming office as the party's President, in 2017. The objective behind the book was to explore the ideological origins and systematic working of Shah's master plan that transformed the BJP into the formidable political mammoth that it currently is. Dr Ganguly also highlighted the need the authors felt to bridge the wide gap that existed in Indian political history narrative. He mentioned that there had been no documentation to assess the growth of Bharatiya Janata Party in the last fifty years. The last time such an exercise had taken place was in 1969, when Craig Baxter, an American diplomat then stationed in New Delhi, authored *History of the Jan Sangh: The Biography of a Political Party*, with documents he sourced from the old guard of the Jan Sangh. Since then, he said, the Jan Sangh has evolved into the BJP, which has gone onwards from first emerging as the main opposition, to more recently, virtually demolishing the Congress's monolith, and becoming the world's largest political organisation.

Adding to this, Mr Dwivedi spoke about how the book fulfils a larger purpose than just recounting Shah's biography. It exemplifies, he says, the aspirational journey of a political organisation formed by idealist members on a path to democracy, lined by various setbacks, undertaken without compromising on its core ideological and moral values along the way.

The authors, while answering questions, also elaborated upon Shah's policy on terrorism, his consensus-based leadership style, the trials he faced in his personal life, and the politics of narrative building in the country, among other things. Concluding the discussion, the authors touched upon the possibility of chronicling his political journey further, as he assumes a new role as India's Minister of Home Affairs in the newly-formed government.

## 7-9 August 2019: Introduction to Indian Strategic Thinking and its Determinants

The tone for the programme was set by Lt Gen Ravi Sawhney, who emphasised on our values which motivate us to thrust our will via words instead of a sword.

The first session by Col DPK Pillay picked up from there to throw some light on the convergence of Indian philosophy, culture and civilisation and its linkages with current narrative on our strategic and security affairs. Lt Gen Ata Hasnain presented an eye opener in the context of Art 370 and Jammu and Kashmir. The entire picture got clearer with the lecture on Pakistan and Afghanistan by Tilak Devashar on the last day. The participants were run through the civilisational thoughts and concepts by Col PK Gautam and Ms Gunjan Pradhan Sinha in their respective lectures, while a complete panorama of India's foreign policy was captured by Amb Rajagopalan.

Contemporary themes like the Role of (Social) Media in National Security was covered by Nitin A Gokhale and Shruti Pandalai. The importance of Science and Technology in upholding the very sovereignty of the nation was explained by Vice Admiral Puri.

The upcoming and most pertinent Non-Traditional Threats were touched upon by Dr Uttam Sinha. He emphasised on the importance of the Human Development Index in the present times. His presentation on the water crisis in South Asian region caught the audience's full attention.

A holistic picture of the National Security framework sustained by the Indian Armed Forces was presented by Lt Gen GS Katoch. He gave an elaborate account of the Higher Defence Organisation in the country while addressing the very basics of the military strategy.

With regards to the maritime strategies, Vice Admiral Satish Soni introduced the participants to various existing concepts/strategies as that of SAGAR, Mausam, Sagarmala and others.

Forming an indispensable part of the national security architecture, the foreign policy of India, especially with regards to its neighbourhood, was well-articulated by Amb Veena Sikri.

Prof Sujit Dutta gave a historical overview of China to augment the already known facts about the country.

Maj Gen PK Mallick provoked the young minds to reflect on the impact of technology.

### **28-29 August 2019: Joint Amity University and VIF Essay Competition and Panel Discussion on 'Vision India 2030'**

Consequent to the signing of MoU between VIF and Amity University, Noida, a joint Essay Competition and a Panel Discussion on 'Vision India 2030' was

conceived and organised by Amity University at their Noida campus. Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The competition generated a lot of enthusiasm amongst the students. The essay writing competition helped all the participating students to discover knowledge by doing extensive research and also gave them the chance to improve upon their writing skills in general. These essays were then evaluated by the subject experts with deep understanding of the topics. On 28 August 2019, a Panel Discussion was held at Amity University, Noida, where the students who had been adjudged first and second for each of the three topics presented their essays and showcased their oratory skills before the august audience. The VIF awarded prizes to the winning students.

### **18-19 September 2019: Workshop on Indian Ethos in Management and Business**

The VIF hosted a two-day workshop titled 'Indian Ethos in Management' for scholars, students, mid-career professionals and business persons in an attempt to formulate and create a narrative for Indian business ethics and ethos. The objective of the workshop was to sensitise and generate a dialogue based on Indian classical economics, business and ethical concepts that are not only part of the textual tradition since ages but have also been in practice over centuries through Indian business persons both in India and overseas.

Shri S. Gurumurthy highlighted the success of the Indian business story globally. Citing the Brahma Sutra Bhāṣya of Adi Shankaracharya he said that there are 8.5 million species according to the text and it is the human being alone that is endowed with the mental faculty to take care of them and the cosmos. In India, a single sided view has not been practiced especially in

the way we do business and conduct our professions. It is well-established through various studies that consumer behaviour in India is not individualistic but based on social recognition.

Dr Rahul Varma spoke extensively about the work his foundation had done towards corporate social responsibility and emphasised the need for a human touch in business. Ms Gunjan Pradhan Sinha, in her lecture, brought to the fore the common thread in Indian thought and praxis that lends ingenuity to the Indian business ethos. She asserted that India has emerged as one of the most powerful economies in the world due to a strong backbone of sustainable business and economic policy that has adapted and yet remained consistent in ideology with changing times.

Dr Shashi Prabha Kumar elaborated on the lessons from *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. Dr Kumar laid great emphasis on the importance of money and resources as mentioned in the Rig Veda and how it should be acquired by valid means. She covered the whole range of economic activities undertaken in the Vedic Society and the ethos which led to visible economic growth. Dr P Kanagasabapathi spoke on home-grown methods of finance, he said Indian businesses have one of the highest savings in the world.

The lectures were followed by a panel discussion. Shri P Satija from Tata Steel, alluded to the 10 rules of conduct that include *yama*, *niyama*, *dama* from the *Bhagvad Gita*, which need to be practiced today by every professional and in every profession. He also elaborated on the lessons from the Mahabharata on resource management. Dr Faizal Ahmad, from Fore School of Management, elucidated the innumerable lessons from *Dharmashastra* and *Manusmriti* for the young managers and business persons in the country. Talking about public discipline in ancient times, he said that there were measures to ensure quality

standards and prevent corruption in weights and measurements.

## 17-19 February 2020: Second Workshop on India's Strategic Thinking for Diplomats-II

The tone for the workshop was set by Shri Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF, who explained the implications of India as a civilisational state had on its governance, politics and engagement with the rest of the world. He insisted that India be perceived as a civilisational entity to understand her approach to strategic affairs. He noted that India's existence today has to be based on Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of Harmony in Diversity. Dr Sanjay Baru took the podium next to throw some light on the state of Indian Economy and its future outlook. He highlighted the paradigm shift in India's economic policy in 1991 and linked it as another way of re-establishing our civilisational links with Asia, more to our East.

The overall picture of India's foreign and security policy was explained by Amb Kanwal Sibal in his lecture. He spoke on the recent developments and challenges for India. Amb Sibal pointed that what we have seen until recently has been the product of trans-Atlantic alliance and its allies. Another important aspect of India's strategic capability was taken up by General NC Vij while addressing on India's defence policy. He mentioned the old fable of Panchatantra to define India's concept of national security which highlights that the most important gift that nature has given us is that of security

The non-traditional aspects of security and India's strategic approach to them were discussed by Dr Uttam Sinha. Under policy implications, Dr Sinha mentioned that it was difficult to segregate the traditional and non-traditional aspects of security. Amb Basant Gupta spoke on Soft Power. He categorised soft power elements into cultural diplomacy, democratic

traditions and foreign policy which use elements of non-military and non-economic. To narrow down India's foreign policy imperatives, particular regions of neighbourhood, China and Pakistan were discussed in the subsequent lectures. Amb Ashok Kanta explained India's foreign policy vis-à-vis China by talking about the rise of China and what it means for Asia and the world at large.

Mr Tilak Devasher, brought to the fore the complicated Indo-Pak relations. He spoke about the Pakistan movement which led to the creation of Pakistan. This baggage was carried forward by the Pakistani leaders in the years after independence. He highlighted the identity crises that persisted for Pakistan as a nation, further complicated by the Islamization movement by its former President Zia ul Haq. Amb Veena Sikri elaborated on India's active and dynamic neighbourhood first policy. These aspects, she suggested, are interlinked with the domestic developments of India. Shared prosperity and shared development is the only way forward for India. Lt Gen Ata Hasnain gave a comprehensive presentation on the situation in J&K and counter terrorism and radicalisation. As an old sufferer of cross-border terrorism, India has now taken strong stance against state-sponsored terrorism by Pakistan. He explained the geography of J&K, considerably influenced by its history. The objective of the workshop was achieved with the involvement of participants with diverse perspectives, cultural and national background. The interactions reflected the curiosity with which the foreign diplomats attended the sessions.

### **6 March 2020: Discussion on Remedial Measures to counter possible spread of Coronavirus**

The VIF organised a discussion with a delegation led by Lt. Gen. RS Grewal, Director General Medical

Services (DGMS), Army, on 'Remedial Measures to counter possible spread of Corona virus' on 06 March 2020. The presentations by the DGMS and ensuing discussions highlighted many concerns regarding the corona virus or COVID-19 epidemic (now declared pandemic by World Health Organization).

In view of the large population, India needs to prioritise strengthening its infrastructure and institutions to effectively deal with the cascading threat of epidemics and bioterrorism. The model of US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of having field stations could be adopted that can constantly monitor the ground situation in India. Further, a Centre for Excellence and Referral Facility needs to be established that can bridge the disciplines of statistics and epidemiology. There is an urgency to address the massive Active Pharma Ingredients (API) dependency on China from the highest level of government. The pharmaceuticals sector is both a major export sector, as well as critical to national security. Government directives also need to be issued that allow for companies to use their funds earmarked for Corporate Social Responsibility to contribute to National Responsibility. The paramilitary forces need to be trained to handle medical threats for the future.

### **11 March 2020: Book Discussion on Towards a New India: Governance Transformed 2014-2019**

The discussants for the book were Shri Sudhir Bhargava, Dr Vinod Kumar Paul and Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog. Director VIF in his welcome remarks, introduced the author and spoke about the contemporary relevance of the book. He opened the discussion by praising the author, Shri V Srinivas for providing a comprehensive view of key government policy measures from a bureaucratic and administrative perspective.

Shri Bhargava lauded the book as a concise and detailed account of various policy measures and their implementation challenges. He asserted that the book describes a way to make government schemes more effective by learning from previous successes and setbacks.

Dr Vinod Kumar Paul, Member NITI Aayog said that the book chronicles public sector reforms coming out of institutional economics, public administration, and from the communities of practice surrounding development agencies seeking to improve governance. The NITI Aayog has been entrusted with the mandate of re-imagining the development agenda by dismantling old-style central planning and has become a Knowledge and Innovation hub.

Shri Amitabh Kant alluded to the series of path-breaking reforms, unleashed by the PM Modi's government, compiled in the book. He said the structural reforms, including GST, in terms of ending crony capitalism with the bankruptcy code, in terms

of real estate reforms through RERA and in terms of direct benefit transfer will make India a very competitive and productively-efficient economy. He stressed that Digital India is a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. By integrating technology into various aspects of the economy, the government has generated vast volumes of datasets. It is imperative to use this data along with computing power and new algorithms to drive huge disruption.

Director VIF, while concluding the discussion said that usage of the unprecedented availability of data effectively and productively is the need of the hour. There are a lot of avenues where the Indian government can leverage big data analytic for developmental plans. Policymakers need to appreciate that India needs to widen its reform process across social sectors, and particularly in Health and Education.

Every individual should have an aim. But do not forget that the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life. Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

**- Sri Aurobindo**



# **Economic Studies**

## Glimpses



With a special edition of Vimarsha on 'Political Stability and Transformation of Union Budget' on February 15, 2020, the VIF launched the newly set-up VIF Centre for Economic Studies. The discussion brought together an eminent panel comprising Shri S. Gurumurthy, Chairman, VIF; Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Member of Parliament & Vice

Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies; Ambassador Prabhat P Shukla, Member, VIF Advisory Council and Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF.

During the year the Centre engaged with eminent economists and suggested several economic policy options to the Government.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 5 December 2019: Interaction with Dr Anantha Nageswaran

The discussion was moderated by Ambassador Prabhat P Shukla, Member of VIF Advisory Council. Some of the salient points raised in the presentation and the consequent discussion were: Does the Chinese political system suppress risk factors? Do the Chinese growth figures deny economic rationale? Is the role of Chinese Foreign Exchange Reserves overstated? Is the CCP hindering China's growth? Other issues discussed included, unsustainability of growth, the 2016 credit binge, IMF prescription and current account surplus in 2019, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the "Trump Factor" - countering China in the long term, issue of aging etc.

### 14 February 2020: Achieving Global Competitiveness Improving Ease of Doing Business

The RTD raised many pragmatic insights and concerns regarding India's Defence Sector. The government's 'Make in India' initiative in the defence sector has focused on the indigenous production of defence equipment and prioritisation of local procurement. Earlier, the industry was a near-monopoly but the revised Defence Procurement Policy of 2016 encouraged the private sector participation. The discussion also highlighted the key challenges faced by private companies in the defence segment. Especially, in the aerospace industry, in which the availability of standard-grade raw material at competitive prices and shorter lead times create restraints. The Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) take too long to develop and to certify the advanced composite products. An inadequacy

persists in the implementation of development and production partner approaches across the aerospace and the defence sector in India. The private players are denied opportunities to bid and there is an atmosphere of continued bias towards the Public Sector Units (PSUs).

The discussion was followed by a vibrant round of questions and answers.

### 27 February 2020: Discussion on Union Budget 2020-21

Dr Nageswaran began by emphasising that the Union Budget should be considered in the context of the inherent non-linear and asymmetric relationship that exists between the Government policy and macroeconomic variables. He asserted that given the difficult economic situation, Budget 2020-21 managed to strike a balance and did not cause any harm to the natural forces of economic recovery in the country.

In addition to an uncertain global economic scenario, the current budget also came against the backdrop of decelerating momentum of GDP growth and declining savings and investment rates. India's gross fixed capital formation as a percentage of GDP has come down from 34% to 28-29%.

Additionally, a global slowdown in emerging market economies has led to low demand, coupled with declining risk appetite of private sector has weakened the engines of economic growth-i.e., exports growth and capital formation.

Given the high fiscal deficit levels, there is very little that government can actually do to revive demand and subsequently growth. In this context, the Government's move to budget a higher capital expenditure this year to stimulate the market should be seen as a positive step to set the ball rolling.

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**



# **Scientific & Technological Studies**

## Glimpses



During the year, Scientific and Technology Studies gained momentum from the national security perspective. The Centre aimed to keep pace with the steadfast rate at which technology has been advancing. As the world started speculating and moving towards the Fifth Generation of ICT, the cluster especially focused on the new set of opportunities and challenges for India. However, this discourse would have been incomplete without acknowledging a whole host of technologies encompassed in the upcoming Fourth Industrial Revolution. China's rising technological dominance remained a concern for the world and India alike.

The series of events and developments thereby, highlighted the importance of indigenous scientific and technological capabilities in India. At the same

time, India's display of counter-space capabilities, as well as its second Moon Exploration mission (Chandrayaan-2), earned India a greater salience in the scientific community. The year provided with some opportune moments for India to rethink its cyber, space and other policies in the technological domain.

The centre organised discussions and seminars, to generate awareness and provide an impetus to an indigenous S&T ecosystem in the country. Concurrently, science diplomacy and technology sharing were re-emphasised as important pillars of foreign policy in various exchanges.

The centre will further delve into these subjects of national concern in the coming year.

## Major Events at a Glance

### 22 April 2019: Release of VIF Task Force Report | Towards More Effective Education: Emergence of STEM Education in India

The task force report was released by Dr VK Saraswat. The report was seen as a timely and significant study to supplement the work of Dr K Kasturirangan committee entrusted with the task for reorganizing STEM education in India. It was agreed that India needs a strong innovation eco-system, which cannot be achieved without radically reforming the STEM education.

The need for harnessing country's strong civilizational strengths in the educational streams of STEM was acknowledged. The programme was attended by a cross-section of civil society members, educationists, and members of the VIF fraternity.

### 29 July 2019: Discussion on different facets of 5G and its security implications for India

Telecom infrastructure is the backbone of digital economy. Cellular access is being upgraded to the next generation, in what is known as 5G networks. These networks promise very high speeds of transmission, broadbands, and low latency for accessing newer applications like virtual reality, augmented reality, driverless cars, entertainment, social media, artificial intelligence and machine learning, with the potential of connecting every home and industrial device to the Internet (IoT). All of these have military, and intelligence dimensions, even as society stands to be transformed with 5G. While there will be the expected cyber security challenges, 5G presents a bigger national security challenge.

The technology for rolling out the new networks is under development by Nokia and Ericsson in the

West, and Huawei in China. Recent political messages and executive orders emerging from the United States give the impression that countries have to choose 5G technology from either of the two camps: US-led or China-led.

### 21 August 2019: US-Japan-India Workshop on Strategic Technology Cooperation

The workshop focused on the potential areas for a trilateral cooperation on 5G technologies and infrastructure. A comprehensive interaction took place between the representatives from Japanese, American and Indian government officials. Officials from JETRO and METI, Japan raised concerns about long term TOT dependence on China.

Dr Hardy from USTDA informed about the US investment policies and FOIP, among others, essential for co-operation between countries.

From the Indian side - Dr Gulshan Rai, Mrs Sundarajan (Secy, DOT), Mr Gupta (Bharti Enterprises) and Dr Saraswat gave their comments on the prospects and challenges associated with 5G in India. The various themes for cooperation and growth were further discussed between the three sides.

### 08 January 2020: Roundtable on Global Nuclear Developments and India's Policy challenges

The discussion analysed the current global nuclear environment and how India should respond to it. It was asserted that India needs to take notice of the new technological changes and start focusing on the research and development on new forms of weaponry for its security and deterrence. It was highlighted that the world is going towards a vertical as well as horizontal proliferation. Evidently, the nuclear arms race has started again and arms control agreements

are also collapsing.

Director VIF was hopeful that the Ministry of External Affairs would collaborate with think tanks for such discussions on pertinent issues on global security situation, to evolve adequate policy responses.

### **05 February 2020: Discussion on Report on STEM Education in collaboration with Association of Indian Universities**

The discussion was a follow up on the task force report on STEM education formerly launched by the VIF. Along with the senior members of AIU and other task force members, this discussion saw the participation of various vice chancellors and professors from many universities. Many important challenges persisting in India's STEM education system were discussed. Discussion focused around revamping the curriculum of various disciplines, to keep our students updated and skilled with the latest.

A lot of recommendations came from the participating professors and educators. Policy intervention was deemed as an imperative to improve the quality of education in our higher education institutes. There was a clear understanding that the implementation and restoration of STEM in India will obviously require follow-ups and further cooperation.

### **8 January 2020: Roundtable on 'Global Nuclear Developments and India's Policy challenges'**

Director VIF opened the floor by laying the purpose of the roundtable, which was to analyse the global nuclear environment and how India should respond to it.

The world is going towards horizontal and vertical proliferation. This is amplified by Iran's attempts for nuclear weapons, which would lead to an arms race in the Middle East. Talking about India's approach to new challenges, there was a general view of all participants that India should not change its nuclear doctrine of 'No first use' as this adequately protects India's security and foreign policy interests. India should once again focus on treaties or resolutions on nuclear arms reductions and arms control that create trust and facilitate moving towards de-nuclearisation.

While pursuing its global nuclear arms control and disarmament posture, India needs to take notice of the new technological changes and start focusing on research and development on new forms of weaponry for its security and deterrence. Nuclear weapons delivery systems are getting more relevant and sophisticated with each passing decade. India should also take stock of China's focus on technological advancements and the application of the same in military systems.

The world can expect that over the next 30-40 years, the security challenges will increase due to the multiplicity of capabilities. India's new discourse should be able to cope up with the current and future nuclear challenges.

The logo consists of the word "Vimarsh" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a dark purple triangular shape that points towards the bottom-left corner of the image. The background is split diagonally from the bottom-left to the top-right, with a light cream color in the upper-left and the dark purple in the lower-right.

**Vimarsh**

## Glimpses



## 11 April 2019: DRDO's Achievements in Defence Indigenisation

Dr G. Satheesh Reddy, Secretary, Department of Defence and Chairman DRDO, was invited for a talk on 'Achievements in Defence Indigenisation' under the aegis of the Vivekananda International Foundation's Vimarsh lecture series.

Director, VIF began the session by welcoming Dr Reddy and congratulating him and his team of scientists for making India proud by successfully conducting the Anti-Satellite Test (ASAT). Stressing the importance of indigenisation in defence sector, Dr Gupta mentioned that 70 per cent of India's armed forces requirements were still imported. Dependence on imports of defence equipment constituted national security vulnerability. Indigenisation of defence equipment, was therefore, need of the hour. The Anti-Satellite Missile Test (ASAT) conducted by the DRDO scientists has again highlighted the organisation's tremendous contribution to indigenisation of defence technologies and production.

In his keynote address, Dr Reddy highlighted the key achievements of the DRDO, its future direction, and also briefly touched on the general ecosystem of indigenisation taking roots in India. The DRDO has been successful in helping create an ecosystem for defence technology in the country. Many of India's leading academic and scientific institutions are today working with the DRDO. Nearly 1200 industries are contributing for various DRDO's programmes. Indeed India cannot rest on past laurels and much more needs to be done. The needs of the armed forces are growing. Large scale programs in hyper-sonic missiles, Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV), Long range radars, robotic system etc. are needed. Dr Reddy mentioned that in order to develop the industry and academia connect, a number of research

centres have been established by the State. There are centres established by the DRDO in different institutions like IIT and Hyderabad University etc. Dr Reddy emphasised on the need to have a "sustained quality" which means that almost all the products should have the same kind of technology and quality.

Dr Reddy extensively interacted with audience during Q&A session.

## 13 June 2019: New Templates for India's National Security Management

On 13 June 2019, Ambassador PS Raghavan, Chairman, National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) delivered a lecture on New Templates for India's National Security Management.

Director, VIF in his welcome address highlighted the relevance of security for the effective conceptualisation of the "New India" campaign. National security is not open for the public discourse, which should be improvised. In spite of 20 years of National Security Council; the government has avoided to publish India's National Strategy.

Amb Raghavan initiated his talk by providing the historical synthesis of national security architecture. He said that while addressing 21st century threats the pre-1999 national security framework fell short on various levels. There were gaps in intelligence coordination and analysis. There was a lack of structures to manage infiltration, migration, smuggling, drugs which were known to be non-traditional security threats.

He said the conflicts had transformed from being land, water and air warfare to space, cyber, and information warfare. The patterns of insurgency and local movements were also dynamic in nature. These next-generation threats required synergizing efforts of various ministries with the right kind of

man-power. The state needed to be innovative while recruiting national security professionals who could be from outside the government, technical disciplines etc. While concluding, Amb Raghavan called for a comprehensive approach which demanded better coordination amongst all ministries and strong centre-state relations. In order to tackle the emerging security threats, he even called for a broader awareness of national security perspective and policies among the masses.

### **19 July 2019: Why Triple Talaq Should be Made a Punishable Offence**

Arif Mohd. Khan, Former Union Cabinet Minister, currently Governor of Kerala put forth an informed argument on 'Why Triple Talaq Should be Made a Punishable Offence'. In his introductory address, Director VIF said that while Triple Talaq had been deemed unconstitutional by a five-member bench of the Hon. Supreme Court in 2017, its criminality in India still remained at the centre of public debate. The Government, following the SC's order, brought about a Bill banning Triple Talaq in December 2017, which could not be passed in the Rajya Sabha. The Government consequently promulgated an ordinance banning it, in September 2018, and re-promulgated it in February 2019 that lapsed with the end of term of the 16th Lok Sabha. The Triple Talaq issue saw heightened relevance once the new Government introduced a fresh Bill in the Lok Sabha in June 2019. This Bill declared Triple Talaq a punishable offence, and proposed a three-year jail term for the husband seeking instant divorce through Triple Talaq. It is this jail punishment that remains the most controversial part of the bill.

Shri Khan spoke about the several state High Courts' judgements outlawing Triple Talaq over the years, in spite of which the practice still persisted. Drawing an

analogy with the abolishment of untouchability, he stressed that punitive action was imperative to bring about long-term behavioural change in people. Shri Khan further quoted the Muslim Personal Law Board's affidavit in 2017 wherein according to Quran, Talaq-e-Bidat was considered to be a *gunah* and *haraam*, and hence prohibited. Recalling the Supreme Court judgement in 2017, he said the Personal Law Board had agreed that this position could be salvaged through the means of legislation alone. In effect, this further validated the Government's effort to bring about a legislation banning Triple Talaq.

### **22 August 2019: Need for Hindu-Buddhist Alliance in Sri Lanka and World Over**

In the run-up to the 'SAMVAD-III: Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness', to be held from 6th to 8th September 2019 at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the VIF held its monthly Vimarsha on 22 August 2019. Ven Athuraliye Rathana Thero, a renowned Buddhist monk and Member of Parliament from Sri Lanka, and Shri S Gurumurthy, a Member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Chairman of the VIF, spoke about the 'Need for Hindu-Buddhist Alliance in Sri Lanka and World over'.

In his keynote address, Ven Athuraliye Rathana Thero stressed the need for mankind to find new pathways, especially keeping in view the fact that while on one hand, mankind has made tremendous progress in science and technology, resulting in what he described as a "magical era" for the mankind, on the other hand, violence, hunger, diseases, malnutrition, besides a host of other problems still persist on a gigantic scale. According to Rathana Thero, what the world really needed to lift itself from the impending crisis was 'spiritual guidance' which could come from India alone.

Shri S Gurumurthy, brought out how Buddhism and Hinduism differed from other religions. He said, people across all religions were the same but all religions were not the same. All religious people had the same tendencies for violence, greed, jealousy, etc. Hinduism and Buddhism were the only two religions which have taught people resistance against such tendencies.

He spoke about *Tarka Shastra* which is singularly the most important contribution by the Hindu-Buddhist civilisation to the world, where religious scholars discuss about each other's spiritual or religious traditions after studying the other view point. He felt, it was the definite responsibility of the Hindu Buddhist civilisations to promote an honest and open debate amongst followers of all religions.

#### **14 October 2019: Panel Discussion on Indraprastha- A Capital Journey**

The panel discussion began with the opening remarks by Director VIF who pointed out how Delhi has a long history and its origins lie in the ancient city of Indraprastha. The city of Indraprastha is mentioned in the epic Mahabharata as established by the Pandavas. Dr Gupta stated that Indraprastha has been documented in ancient texts as well as in the documents of the Sultanate, Mughal and the British periods. The name has been mentioned in the Mahabharata, the Purana, certain tantric works, as well as in Jain and Buddhist texts. Dr Gupta further emphasised that the journey of our Capital from the days of Indraprastha was a fascinating one and that we need to sensitize and raise awareness about it.

According to Dr Brij Mohan Pande, former director of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Indraprastha has been mentioned in several inscriptions including references to it by General Alexander Cunningham. However, he stated that there were only scanty

reference to Indraprastha in such texts and inscriptions. Dr Pande gave a detailed picture of the excavations done in Purana Qila and indicated the materials found from the Mauryan, Gupta, Sultanate and Mughal periods.

Dr Come Carpentier de Gourdon, a French scholar on Indology, historically traced Indraprastha from Mahabharata and mentioned how it had always been a seat of power. He mentioned Delhi's strategic position, which was fortified to protect itself from the invaders. Dr Gourdon highlighted that history of Indraprastha was indirectly referred in different cultures, which could be found in Persia and Middle East. Dr Gourdon brought to notice that Indraprastha was also mentioned in Buddhist Jatakas and is referred to as a Tiratha.

Ms Neera Mishra, Chairperson, Draupadi Trust, dwelt on the neglect and misperceptions about studying the history of the capital city. She said that neglect was due to the methodology of studying ancient India, which was imposed by the colonial rulers. Ms Mishra stressed that these should be studied as books of *Itihasa* providing information on the sacred history and geography of our country.

#### **27 December 2019: Discussion on Politics of Opportunism**

The session also marked the launch of Shri RNP Singh's latest book: *Politics of Opportunism: Regional Parties, Coalitions, Centre-State Relations in India*. Director VIF, in his welcome address emphasised the relevance of the book in the current socio-political scenario. Shri Singh's recent book is a comprehensive and highly-readable account of Indian politics as it has developed at the state and central level since Independence. It analyses the decline of the Indian National Congress that led to the rise of regionalism and coalition politics in the country.

According to the book, a framework of healthy cooperative federalism is the key to India's success, which however, often gets overlooked as parties focus on narrow issues that garner them votes instead of pursuing national interest. In his view, the age of coalitions will last for long as no single party is capable of ruling a diverse country such as India. Effective coordination among parties – a prerequisite for this – is hindered due to a breakdown of mutual trust leading to political instability. Students of politics and governance will find the book especially useful.

Shri Gurumurthy after releasing the book began his address by ascribing the emergence of regionalism in Indian politics as a response to the inevitable concentration of power in Delhi over the years resulting in its indifference towards rest of the country. He describes Delhi as a city that yields power, experiences power, dispenses power, and likes power. He identified the need for a wider, pan-Indian thought initiative as opposed to Delhi's narrow, inward perspective that alienates the rest of the country.

Further, Shri Gurumurthy identified two types of regionalism - the permissible one, based on principles, and the dangerous one, resulting from opportunism. Shri Gurumurthy concluded his remarks by analysing the current developments in the country in opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Tracing the history of political debates over the years on this issue, he highlighted the opportunistic stand of the very political leaders who had supported it earlier.

### **13 January 2020: Vivekananda and National Regeneration**

Pravrajika Divyanandaprana began her address by giving the audience a picture of who exactly Swami Vivekananda was. She said that Vivekananda was no ordinary man and that he was a “spiritual powerhouse”, a man of realisation. According to her,

Swami Vivekananda was placed on this earth by God, for a purpose, and that purpose was the betterment of the society. And that since he was placed on this earth by God, everything he said, every pointer he gave for national regeneration, came directly from the source (God).

The ethos that our civilisation, which predates all religions and much of human history, carries through its literature like the Rigveda is the message of spirituality which is bigger than any religion. This civilisation created a great knowledge society based on the spiritual ethos. By dwelling deep into the nature of the subjective world, our forefathers have discovered enormous laws of the subjective world which have been encapsulated in the Yoga Sutras and Vedanta literature. Swami Vivekananda propagated this idea of spirituality passionately because he believed that before we deluge this land with social and political ideas, we should deluge it with spiritual ideas.

Pravrajika Divyanandaprana highlighted a few initiatives that should be pursued with vigour such as setting up of ‘Vocational Training Institutions’, MSMEs, skill development opportunities etc. She observed that India as a country has a great advantage in terms of its demographic dividend; that is the huge youth population our country has. She concluded her address by giving the audience a glimpse of the ideas Swami Vivekananda had on education. She said that Vivekananda gave education the most importance because he strongly believed that education was the key to development.

### **17 January 2020: India's Space Programme: Achievements and Prospects**

Dr A.S Kiran Kumar, former Chairman ISRO, was invited to speak on the opportunities, challenges and perspectives on Indian Space Missions. Dr Kiran Kumar is presently Vikram Sarabhai Professor at ISRO

and a member at Space Commission and Governing Council of Indian Institute of Science.

Dr Kiran Kumar began his presentation by revisiting an incident from the days when ISRO launched its first rocket. This is also the birth centenary year of Dr Vikram Sarabhai, father of India's Space Programme, which ISRO is celebrating from August 2019. The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has been another recent development by the ISRO in this direction.

Dr Kiran Kumar made reference to India's remote sensing capabilities. These satellites that enable us to look at India and its surroundings have evolved from 1km resolution to 28-30cm resolution provided by Cartosat-3. Alongside, India has established hyper spectral imaging capabilities from space. After Chandrayaan-1 and thereby demonstrating our capability to build synthetic aperture radar and fly them, India has gained recognition from all over the world. With this ability, ISRO has got on board with NASA on the NISAR mission. The progressive militarisation of space has made it important for nations to develop these capabilities unless they want to remain peripheral actors. Being amongst the few countries with end-to-end capability, he suggested that it is India's responsibility to ensure that the technology development is accessible to entrepreneurs. This can contribute to reduction in cost of access, especially for the lesser developed countries where this technology can be commercialised.

### **15 February 2020: Discussion on Political Stability and Transformation of Union Budget**

The public event which marked the launch of the newly set-up VIF Centre for Economic Studies, brought together an eminent panel comprising of Shri

S. Gurumurthy, Chairman, VIF; Member of Parliament Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Vice Chairman, Centre for Economic Studies, VIF; Ambassador Prabhat P. Shukla, Member, Advisory Council VIF and Dr Arvind Gupta, Director, VIF.

Rajya Sabha MP and Member of Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Finance, Shri Chandrashekhar drew a correlation between political stability and economic growth in his presentation. He put forth a comparative analysis of economic trends in the country spanning over the past few decades. He divided the timeline of India's post-independence economic history into four broad phases based on political leadership, i.e. : (i) strong leader, single party government [2014 onwards]; (ii) strong leader, weak coalition government [1991-1996; 1999-2004]; (iii) weak leader, coalition government [2004-2009, 2009-2014] and (iv) weak leader, unstable coalition [pre-1991, pre-1999].

The data highlighted how decades of weak leadership and governance instability had a negative drag on the Indian economy, impacting key macroeconomic variables including GDP growth, investments, government finances, current account balance, and inflation.

As a corollary, he also posited that it is the politically stable and strong leadership at the centre since 2014 that has addressed these legacy issues, re-building a broken and lagging economy to now making it the fifth largest globally.

The Government debt as percent of Nominal GDP amounted to 50% in 2013, which has been brought down to 44% in 2019. India witnessed deadly combination of low growth and high inflation. Its external debt has come down to 19% of GDP in 2019, from 23.8% of GDP in 2013.

In the six years since, the Modi Government has undertaken a slew of governance and structural reforms to clean up and rebuild the economy. These range from implementation of GST, reduction in corporate tax regime, formalisation and digitisation to plug leaks in the financial system, to undertaking several efforts towards public-sector bank recapitalisation and restructuring for mitigating the mega NPA crisis left by the UPA Government. The impact of these is evident in stable macroeconomic fundamentals and improved domestic business environment yielding increased inward FDI levels.


The policy objective of this government of reaching the GDP level of \$5 trillion would provide the Government an unprecedented fiscal capacity for spending on its priorities like national security, social welfare, healthcare and education. Achievement of this target however requires a series of further reforms. Shri Chandrashekhar emphasised that expansion of domestic manufacturing sector by \$1 trillion, 15% credit growth, prioritising exports-growth, and undertaking of governance and structural reforms would be crucial to enable the economy to progress on this trajectory. He concluded by reinstating that with the political stability that the current government offers, this is not just an aspirational, but an achievable goal.

Shri Gurumurthy's address focused on the need for inculcating an indigenous Indian thought into economic policy making. Refuting the misguided idea that the 'Hindu Rate of Growth' was dragging the global economy backward, Shri Gurumurthy cited academic evidence which validates that to the contrary, India and China had - until colonisation - been the developmental engines of the world. He stressed on the role of educational institutions and think tanks in rekindling the Indian consciousness

and developing original solutions for the nation's concerns.

He brought to the audience's notice the evolution of the budget as a statement of financial accounts in recent years, in contrast to the political nature it had come to assume during subsequent governments in the past. Shri Gurumurthy further presented a four-point plan for reviving economic growth in the country and dealing with uncertain global environment. He stressed that the financial sector should undertake the burden of rebuilding the economy.

Amb Shukla's presentation emphasised the changing nature of global economy and its implications for India. He listed unsustainable levels of global debt and decline of the multilateral trading order as the major risks facing the global economy. Due to decline in global demand, it is imperative for India to leverage the strength of its enormous domestic consumer base. His policy recommendations for this focused on the following: Stimulate domestic consumption by lowering direct taxes - while corporate tax has been lowered, income and property-related taxes must also be lowered, Taxation: move towards light regulation, strict enforcement, and policy stability, let go of Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management Act (FRBM) limits for the short-term. While this is already being done, there remains the risk of ratings downgrade due to short-term increase in budget deficits. Requires careful explanation to avoid this: Bring the cash economy into the formal banking and financial sector, Domestic demand should benefit domestic industry. Trade barriers essential to stop Chinese goods from being dumped into Indian markets. Do not weaken the Rupee, instead focus on boosting exports through SEZs and other producer-side incentives. Population control through behavioural change essential for sustainable economic growth.



# **Resource Research Centre & Library**



The Resource Research Centre & Library, supports the research fraternity of the VIF in meeting their various information requirements, both in primary as well as allied areas of research. Right since its inception, the Centre has endeavoured to be creative as well as innovative not just in conceptualizing but also in fructifying new channels of information, tailored especially to meet the ever-growing demands for information in new areas of research. The Library has a remarkable collection of high quality and peer reviewed books, journals and other associated resources, including an equally impressive archive of Public Opinion Trends on the neighbouring countries. In keeping with the changing dynamics of information science, the Centre has kept its focus on building up a vast reservoir of digital resources, comprising of both primary and secondary sources. The digital archive, developed in-house using an open source software, provides just the right platform to access catalogues of physical books as well as e-resources, obtained from myriad sources. The Library presently has a collection of 3,532 physical books and 13,550 e-resources, comprising of e-books, reports, monographs etc. Besides, the Library also subscribes to a number of reputed journals and newspapers. Some of the salient

features of the VIF's research Resource Centre and Library are as follows:

**Automation:** While the library's database is fully digitized, all its services including lending, procurement, cataloguing etc. are fully automated from the beginning. The On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is accessible from every computer terminal in the building.

**Digital Library:** One of the key features of the VIF's Library has been its continued focus on e-resources. The Library has a unique database of e-resources, which include e-books, white papers, publications of various national and international organizations, annual reports of various ministries, occasional papers, monographs, etc.

**Membership of DELNET:** The VIF's Library is also linked to DELNET, a consortium that promotes resource-sharing amongst member libraries. The inter-library loan and document delivery services provided by DELNET are hugely popular among the VIF'S research faculty.

**Selective Disseminations of Information:** As part of an endeavour to reach out to its patrons as also

the academia at large, the Resource Research Centre sends out daily alerts in the form of Neighbourhood News Digest and Information Alerts. These daily alerts are meant to keep the targeted readership ahead of the information curve, as also keep them well-informed about latest trends and developments in areas of their research. Both 'Neighbourhood News Digest' and 'Information Alerts' form part of VIF's Daily Update on its website.

**Online Database:** In realization of the fact that irrefutable, authentic data is the first requisite for any credible, cutting-edge research, the Resource Research Centre has taken upon itself the onerous task of creating an online database of primary source materials, comprising of acts of legislative bodies, treaties, white papers, reports, press releases, parliamentary Q&As etc., and making it available for the wider research community through its website. The database - a work in progress - presently has an impressive collection of 3580 records. The Online

Database has been viewed over 22,000 times as on the date of writing this report.

### Compendium on Jammu and Kashmir

Creation of a comprehensive compendium on Jammu and Kashmir has been another remarkable achievement of the Research Resource Centre & Library in the last one year. The Compendium has information on geography, demography, culture and history of Kashmir. It deals with J&K's accession to India, Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism, radicalization of youth, measures taken by India to deal with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the abrogation of Article 370 and the current situation, among other pertinent issues. It also has a chapter on the denial of human rights to the residents of POK and Gilgit-Baltistan by Pakistan. The Compendium is based on authentic sources. It would be worth mentioning here that work is also in progress on the creation of a similar Compendium on China.

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**

# Our Exchanges Worldwide

Think Tanks, Institutions, Universities with whom VIF had Exchanges during 2019-20

## Australia

- Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)

## China

- China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)
- 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
- Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), Sichuan University
- China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)
- Shanghai Institute for International Studies
- Fudan University
- Intellisias Institute
- International Department of Communist Party of China

## Germany

- The Institute for Transnational Studies (ITS)

## Israel

- The Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs (JCPA)
- Jerusalem Centre

## Japan

- The Japan Foundation

## Jordan

- West Asia-North Africa Institute

## Myanmar

- Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS)
- Myanmar Institute of Peace & Security (MIPS)
- Institute for Strategy and Policy- Myanmar (ISP- Myanmar)
- Thayninga Institute for Strategic Studies (TISS)

## Mongolia

- Gandan Thegchenling Monastery - Centre of Mongolian Buddhists
- Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace
- Institute of Strategic Studies

## Namibia

- University of Namibia

## New Zealand

- Asia New Zealand Foundation
- Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University

## Russia

- Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)
- Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS)
- Foundation for the Study of Democracy

## South Korea

- Korean National Diplomatic Academy

## Sri Lanka

- Pathfinder Foundation

## Taiwan

- The Prospect Foundation
- Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA)

## UK

- Institute of International & Strategic Studies (IISS)

## USA

- The Atlantic Council
- The Heritage Foundation
- US-India Security Council Inc. (USISC)
- Hudson Institute, Washington DC

## 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)
- The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

## Trustees

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### Vice Chairman

Amb Satish Chandra

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**Anil Bajjal** (Lieutenant Governor of Delhi & Former Home Secretary)

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**Arif Mohammad Khan** (Governor of Kerala)

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**Amb Prabhat P Shukla** (Former Ambassador to Russia)

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**Amb Rajiv Sikri** (Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs)

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**Prof Kapil Kapoor** (Chairman, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla & Former Pro Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

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**Dhirendra Singh** (Former Home Secretary)

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**Prakash Singh** (Former Director General, Border Security Force)

---

**Dr A Surya Prakash** (Former Chairman, Prasar Bharati, Author & Scholar of Contemporary Studies)

---

**Prof R Vaidyanathan** (Former Professor of Finance, IIM Bangalore)

---

## Executive Committee

**S Gurumurthy** (Author and Financial Expert, Editor – Tughlak), **Chairman, VIF**

---

**Amb Satish Chandra** (Former Deputy National Security Advisor), **Vice Chairman, VIF**

---

**Gen NC Vij, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM** (Former Chief of the Army Staff, Founder Vice Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority), **Former Director, VIF**

---

**Dr Arvind Gupta** (Former Deputy National Security Advisor & DG, IDSA), **Director, VIF**

---



## Distinguished Fellows

Prof Dilip K Chakrabarti (Editor, VIF History Volumes & Professor Emeritus, Department of Archaeology, Cambridge University)

---

Dr VK Saraswat (Member NITI Aayog, Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Former DG, DRDO & Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister)

---

Prof CR Babu (Professor Emeritus, Delhi University, Ecologist & Environmentalist)

---

Prof K.K. Aggarwal (Founder Vice Chancellor, GGS Indraprastha University, New Delhi & Chairman, NBA, MHRD, New Delhi)

---

CD Sahay (Former Secretary, Research & Analysis Wing, Cabinet Secretariat)

---

Vice Adm Raman Puri, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Former C-in-C, Eastern Naval Command & Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman COSC)

---

Amb TCA Rangachari (Former Ambassador to France & Germany)

---

Lt General SA Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM (Bar), VSM (Bar) (Former GOC 15 Corps & Military Secretary)

---

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

---

Amb Ashok K Kantha (Former Ambassador to China)

---

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)

---

G. Mohan Kumar (Former Defence Secretary)

---

Amit Cowshish (Former Additional Controller General of Defence Accounts)

---

Prof Sujit Dutta (Former Professor Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi)

---

DP Singh (Eminent Lawyer)

---

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

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# 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 Editors



**Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee, PVSM, AVSM, YSM**

(Former Chief of Staff, Central Command)



**Brig Vinod Anand**

(Senior Fellow, VIF)

## Consultants



**Tilak Devasher**  
(Pakistan)



**Maj Gen PK Mallick**  
(Cyber Security & China)



**Dr Vijay Sakhuja**  
(Maritime)



**Surinder Sharma**  
(Terrorism)

## Senior Fellows



**Brig Vinod Anand**  
(Defence Studies, China & Myanmar)



**RNP Singh**  
(Indian Political Thought)



**Naval Jagota**  
(Defence Studies)



**Shashank Sharma**  
(Defence Studies)



**Pushpinder Bath**  
(Defence Studies)

## Research Fellows



**Dr Arpita Mitra**  
(Indian History & Culture)



**Dr Teshu Singh**  
(China & Taiwan)

## Associate Fellows



**Prerna Gandhi**  
(Japan, ASEAN & Koreas)



**Himani Pant**  
(EU, Russia & US)



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



**Soumya Awasthi**  
(Religion)

## Research Associates



**Aayush Mohanty**  
(China, National Security)



**Dr Yatharth Kachiar**  
(Afghanistan & Pakistan)



**Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta**  
(Central Asia)



**Anurag Sharma**  
(Terrorism & Cyber Security)



**Hirak Jyoti Das**  
(West Asia)



**Amruta Karambelkar**  
(Indo-Pacific)



**Aakriti Vinayak**  
(Pakistan)



**Cchavi Vasisht**  
(Neighbourhood)

## Research Assistants



**Radhika Daga**  
(Science & Technology)



**Heena Samant**  
(Climate Change & Databases)

## Young Professionals



Navreet Kullar



Aishwarya Verma



Samriddhi Roy



Viddhi Thakker



Shaurya Agrawal



Muskaan Bisen



Anmol Mahajan

# 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 & Front Office Assistant)

## Resource Research Centre & Library



**Jyoti Kumar**  
Consultant (Library)



**Abhijit Biswas**  
(Library & Web Coordinator)



**Manisha Bhadula**  
(Library & Front Office Assistant)

## Office Assistants



**Christopher Francis**



**Naresh Singh**



**Naresh Kumar**



**Kishore Kumar**



**Keshab Ram Sharkee**

# Scholars Outreach

## Arvind Gupta - Director, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Beyond ASAT test: India needs a Comprehensive Space Security Policy', Published in The Economic Times, 06 April 2019.
2. 'बढ़ता तनाव, गहराती आशंकाएं', Published in Hindustan, 21 May 2019.
3. 'India-Pakistan Talks at SCO Summit unlikely after Balakot, Pulwama - Ex-Official', Published in Sputnik News, 22 May 2019.
4. 'CPEC core reason of dispute', Published in March - April issue of India China Chronicle, 27 May 2019.
5. 'New Govt's Foreign Policy agenda needs comprehensive approach', Published in The Economic Times, 03 June 2019.
6. 'CDS is 1st step towards higher organisation reforms', Published in The Economic Times, 17 August 2019.
6. Attended 'Annual G20 address' organised by ICRIER, 30 May 2019.
7. Addressed the Diplomats from Central Asia and Maldives on 'National Security' at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), New Delhi, 27 June 2019.
8. Participated in the Book rendition of 'Draupadi and Her Pañchala: Re-asserting their Place in History', at IIC, New Delhi, 27 June 2019.
9. Talk on 'Future Contours of India's foreign and security policy in the Modi 2.0 Era 'at Army War College Mhow, 03 July 2019.
10. Attended 8th World Peace Forum meeting in Beijing. Spoke on 'Trend of International Configuration: Bipolar or Multipolar?' & 'International Order Transformation and Regional Conflicts', 08-09- July 2019.
11. Participated in ASSOCHAM Interactive Session with the Indian Defence Industry as Chief Guest, 20 July 2019.
12. Delivered Inaugural address on the topic 'National Security and Foreign policy' at OP Jindal University, Sonapat, 02 August 2019.

### Participation in Conferences

1. Attended Inaugural Session on the occasion of 'Annual Session 2019 India 5.0: India@75 and Beyond' at CII, 04 April 2019.
2. Attended a talk by former President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee on '150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi' at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 05 April 2019.
3. Spoke at Diplomats Roundtable in JNU on 'India's Foreign Policy: The Modi-Years', 15 April 2019.
4. Participated in the brainstorming session on 'India-Russia relations' organised by the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 09 May 2019.
5. Attended a meeting on 'High Level Committee of the Centre for National Security Studies' organised at JNU, 27 May 2019.
13. Joined the CII task force on 'Enabling a robust and secure cyber eco-system in India' at CII, New Delhi, 06 August 2019.
14. Attended a session titled 'Security Scenario in the Indian Subcontinent: Implications for National Security' at CRPF Academy Gurgaon, 19 August 2019.
15. Delivered a Talk on 'National Security' at FSI, New Delhi, 02 September 2019.
16. Delivered a Talk on 'Role of Defence Diplomacy in shaping favourable Strategic Neighbourhood' at National Defence College, Delhi, 16 September 2019.
17. Chaired a session on 'Maritime Conflict and Co-operation in Indo-Pacific' at JNU, New Delhi, 20 September 2019.

18. Delivered a talk on 'India's National Security & Challenges' for Foreign Diplomats at FSI, New Delhi, 09 October 2019.
19. Spoke at the Strategic Panel Discussion on the 'Unique 2nd Informal Modi-Xi Jinping Summit' in Chennai. (Joint VIF -SASTRA University Event), 10 October 2019.
20. Spoke as a Panelist at the session on 'Cyber Preparedness, Response & Policy' during India – Netherlands Technology Summit jointly organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India at New Delhi, 15 October 2019.
21. Spoke on 'Future of war and conflict' and on 'How India is meeting its neighborhood challenge' at Synergia Conclave, organised by Synergia Foundation at Bangalore, 18 October 2019.
22. Spoke at 3rd India Forum on China on 'China's influence in Asian geopolitics: implications for India', organised by ICS, Goa, 07 December 2019.
23. Attended the EAM's meeting on the 'Challenges for India's foreign policy' at Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, New Delhi, 11 January 2020.
24. Delivered a talk on 'Global Scan on IW' at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, 20 January 2020.
25. Delivered a talk on 'India's nuclear stance' at National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, 20 January 2020.
26. Delivered a talk to IFS officers' trainees on 'India's Track 1.5 and Track 2.0 Diplomacy' at FSI, 13 February 2020.
27. Attended the inaugural 'Admiral KK Nayyar memorial lecture' at NMF, New Delhi, 15 February 2020.
28. Delivered a special address on 'India's engagement with the Changing Arctic' at ICWA, 04 March 2020.

#### Television Appearances

1. Interview on National Security and Elections 2019 in Rajya Sabha TV, 20 May 2019.
2. An interview on Indo-US and Afghanistan-Pakistan at Rajya Sabha TV, 20 February 2020.

3. An interview on Trump's visit to India at Doordarshan, 24 February 2020.
4. An interview on Trump's visit to India at Doordarshan, 25 February 2020.

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

#### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Cross border terror: friendly neighbours and escalation dangers', Published in India Review and Analysis, Volume 3, 01 April 2019.
2. 'India and Nepal are important to each other', Published in FRPC Journal 38, 2019.
3. 'India-Bangladesh Relations: in the Context of Recent Elections in Bangladesh', Published in Indian Foreign Affairs Journal (Vol. 13, No. 4, October – December 2018, 267-315), Published in May 2019.
4. 'Will India infuse fresh life into BIMSTEC?', Published in South Asia Monitor, 30 May 2019.
5. 'Pipeline could herald a new chapter in India-Nepal ties', Published in South Asia Monitor, 28 September 2019.
6. 'Modi and Hasina Making the Bilateral Work', Published in Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, News Reel Vol 1 Issue 1, December 2019 - January 2020.

#### Participation in Conferences

1. Spoke at ISAS workshop on 'Assessing the Transformation of Bangladesh', Singapore, 23 May 2019.
2. Delivered a Guest lecture on 'Bangladesh's development – a Mixed Story', Singapore, 24 May 2019.
3. Spoke on 'Connecting India's North-East with North-West Region of Myanmar: Roadmap for all-round Prosperity', in Imphal, Manipur, 11 June 2019.
4. Spoke on 'Bridging Borders with Art', U.S Consulate of Kolkata, American Center, 19 June 2019.
5. Spoke on 'Security Challenges in the Global South',

at International conference at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 08 August 2019.

6. Delivered a talk on 'India and its Neighbours with special reference to Act East Policy', The Heritage Academy, Kolkata, 10 August 2019.
7. Spoke on 'India and Bangladesh' at 9th round of Bangladesh-India Friendship Dialogue, Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, October 31 - November 4, 2019.
8. Spoke on 'India's Neighbourhood First Policy' at Foreign Policy Dialogue 2019, Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi, 06 November 2019.
9. Participated as a discussant for evaluating a report on 'Energising Connectivity Between North East and Its Neighbour', Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in partnership with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 07 January 2020.
10. Spoke on 'India is not interested in BRI' in an International conference on 'Belt and Road Initiative and Indo-Pacific Strategy: Opportunities and Challenges', National Institute for South China Sea Studies and Pathfinder Foundation at Colombo, Sri Lanka, 13 January 2020.
11. Spoke at a seminar on 'India's North-East States: from Tranquillity to Turmoil', at The Asia Centre, Bangalore, 25 January 2020.
12. Delivered a talk on 'India's Foreign Policy: Initiatives in the Eastern Neighbourhood', at Central University of Gujarat, 30 January 2020.
13. Delivered a talk on 'India's developmental policies in Northeast and its implication: The Civil Perspective', at the Defence Staff Services Command, Wellington, 04 February 2020.

### **Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee - Senior Fellow, VIF**

#### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'China's New Constellation in Asia-Pacific', Published in The Indian Defence Review, 02 April 2019
2. 'Disorientations of National Defence - I', Published in

The Indian Defence Review, 03 July 2019

3. 'A Culture of Leadership in India', Published in The Fauji India Magazine, 31 July 2019
4. 'Disorientations of National Defence - II', Published in The Indian Defence Review, 04 October 2019

#### **Participation in Conferences**

1. Delivered a talk on, 'PLA in 2018-19', at National Institute of Advance Studies, Bangalore, 24 April 2019.
2. Chaired Mentoring Sessions on 'Strategies for National Defence' for PhD Students of SRM University and selected Military Officers at Lucknow, 01-06 September 2019.

#### **TV Appearances**

1. Panel Discussion on, 'US Withdrawal from Afghanistan', Rajya Sabha TV, 14 June 2019.

### **Brig Vinod Anand - Senior Fellow, VIF**

#### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'India closer to Korea than you think in diplomatic and security policy' published in Korea Times on 27 April 2019.
2. 'A Perspective on BRICS Development Strategies: Prospects and Issues'. Book Chapter in book titled 'The Coordination of BRICS Development Strategies towards Shared Prosperity' edited by Linggui Wang and Jianglin Zhao of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China, published in October 2019.
3. 'Indian Army-Pangs of Modernisation' Book Chapter in SP's Military Year Book- 2019.
4. 'Whither Jointness and Integration: Is it in Name only?' Book Chapter in SP's Military Year Book- 2019.
5. 'BRICS summit results indicate increase in union's potential in world politics', majorly quoted, Penza News, Russia, 27 November 2019.
6. 'Politically milder but yet socially assertive approach can resolve S. China Sea dispute', Capital Cambodia Khmer Times, 29 November 2019.

7. 'Turk Stream to intensify Russia-Turkey relations and strengthen Russia's position in EU energy market' majorly quoted Penza News, 31 January 2020.
8. 'Sino-India Ties: Seeking Pragmatism Amid Divergences', The Diplomatist, 07 March 2020.
11. Co-chaired a seminar on 'Indo-Pacific, RCEP, CPEC and India-China relations' at China Foreign Affairs University, 03 December 2019.
12. Participated in discussion on 'Clean and Biomass Energy etc.', Sichuan Energy Industry Investment Group, Chengdu, 04 December 2019.

### Participation in Conferences

1. 'International Diplomatic Issues and Foreign Policies' at Korean National Diplomatic Academy organised by Korea Foundation at Seoul, 08 April 2019
2. Interaction with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, South Korea on "South Korea's Foreign Policy and Unification of Korea", 09 April 2019.
3. Conference at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul on 'Regional and International Developments and India-South Korea Relations', 10 April 2019.
4. Presented a paper at Korean Institute for Defense Analysis and faculty on 'India-South Korea Defence Cooperation and the Way Forward', 10 April 2019.
5. Presented a paper at Centre for ASEAN-India Studies and its faculty on 'India-South Korea Relations and the Way Forward', 11 April 2019.
6. Delivered a lecture at Foreign Service Institute on 'India and Regional Organizations' to 1st Special Course for Diplomats from League of Arab States, 25 July 2019.
7. Chaired a Session on 'Current Challenges in South China Sea' as part of international conference on South China Sea organised by OP Jindal Global University at India International Centre, New Delhi, 29 November 2019.
8. Co-chaired a meeting on 'India- China Relations held at China Tibetology Research Centre', Beijing during an interaction of Indian multi-think tank delegation with Chinese scholars, 02 December 2019.
9. Co-chaired a discussion with Dy. Director General Asian Affairs, MOFA, PRC and his staff on 'India-China relations and the way forward', 02 December 2019.
10. Co-chaired a discussion during a seminar on 'The Changing International, Regional Situation and China-India Relations' at the Pangoal Institute, Beijing, 03 December 2019.
13. Co-chaired a conference on 'India-China relations' at South Asia Institute of Sichuan University, Chengdu, 05 December 2019.
14. Participated in a 'Workshop on India-China Relations & Governance Experience Sharing' at Yunnan Provincial Party School of CPC, Kunming, 06 December 2019.
15. Co-chaired a Symposium on 'International and Regional Situation and Sino-India Relationship Development' at Institute of South and South East Asia Yunnan University, Kunming, 06 December 2019.
16. Participated in a conference 'International & Regional Environment and India-China Relations post Informal Summit at Mamallapuram' at Centre for South Asia Studies, Institute for International Relations Tsinghua University, Beijing, 19 December 2019.
17. Presented a paper on 'India's Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Issues & Prospects' during an international conference on 'Counter Extremism-Dialogue and Cooperation' organised by Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies, China Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, 20 December 2019.
18. Delivered valedictory address for the Responsible Netism 4th National Cyber Psychology Conference 2020 on 'Child Online Protection' at Pune, 24 January 2020.

### TV Appearances

1. Participated in Panel Discussion on 'India-Vietnam Relations', The Big Picture, Rajya Sabha TV, 09 May 2019.
2. Participated in discussion on Field marshal KM Cariappa's death anniversary's In Depth Programme, Rajya Sabha TV, 15 May 2019.
3. Participated in discussion on 'DNA: BIMSTEC leaders invited for Modi's swearing-in, Imran Khan left out' Published in Zee News TV, 28 May 2019.

4. Participated in Desh Deshantar Program- Panel Discussion on 'India and the SCO Summit', Rajya Sabha TV, 11 June 2019.
5. 'India's New Foreign Policy Challenges and Opportunities' Video Interview The Policy Times, 23 July 2019.
6. Participated in RSTV Programme 'In Depth' - Yudh Abhyas 2019- India-US Joint Military Exercise, 20 September 2019.
7. Participated in a Panel Discussion on 'Modi Trump Magic in Houston', Rajya Sabha TV The Big Picture programme, 23 September 2019.
2. 'What's next in India - U.S. Relation', Published in New Indian Express, 29 February 2020.

#### Participation in Conferences

1. As a panelist participated in a Brainstorming session on 'India-Russia Relations' at the ICWA, 09 May 2019.
2. Gave a lecture at the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tallinn, on 'India Between the US and Russia – the Challenge of Sanctions', 17 May 2019
3. Invited for the Lennart Meri Conference in Tallinn, Estonia. Spoke at the Panel on 'China and the West: A View from Asia', 17-19 May 2019.
4. Panelist at JNU's National Conference on 'India-US-China Emerging Strategic Equations', 19-20 September 2019.
5. Spoke as a Panelist on 'Economic Challenges: Trade and Investment Patterns and Foreign Policy Trade Offs' at a National Conference on 'India-US-China Emerging Strategic Equations' at JNU, New Delhi, 20 September 2019.
6. As part of a multi think tank delegation to Beijing, Chengdu and Kunming, China at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs made presentations on 'New Dynamics in India-US Relations' and 'Trump's Indo-Pacific Strategy' at the MOFA in Beijing and Chinese Foreign Affairs University, Beijing. Spoke on 'The Quad and India's Indo-Pacific Vision' at the South Asia Centre of Sichuan University, Chengdu, 30 November – 08 December 2019
7. Spoke on 'Challenges in India-US Trade and Defence Relations', at the Centre for the Canadian, United States and Latin American Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, for an interaction on 'US-India Relations Post Trump Visit', 04 March 2020.

### Jaideep Chanda, Former Senior Fellow, VIF

(August 2019 to July 2020)

#### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Myanmar on the Banned Wagon! The Counter productive Effects of Sanctions on the Myanmar Military', Published in Mizzima News, 05 December 2020.
2. 'Riverine Warfare: Emerging Trend in the Rakhine Conflict in Myanmar', Published in Kalinga International Foundation Commentary, 27 January 2020.
3. 'Myanmar's Rakhine conflict threatens regional peace', Published in South Asia Monitor, 21 March & in Eurasia Review, 24 March 2020.

#### Participation in Conferences

1. Presented a paper titled 'Defence Diplomacy in India Myanmar Relations', at the International Conference on 'Warfare in South Asia: From Ancient to Modern Times', Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 07-08 January 2020.

### Dr Harinder Sekhon - Former Consultant, VIF

(July 2019 to June 2020)

#### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'अपनी चिंताएँ बताने का मौका' Published in Hindustan Newspaper, 24 February 2020.

#### Television Appearances

1. Participated in different TV Channels (India Today, Times Now, CNN News, Doordarshan, Rajya Sabha TV ) on 'PM's Visit to the US'. September 2019.
2. Participated in Namaste Trump: Special programme on 'US President Donald Trump's upcoming India Visit', at DD News, 18 February 2020.

3. Panel discussion on 'Trump Visit', at CNN News 18, 21 February 2020.
4. Appeared on Times Now, NDTV, India Today, CNN News 18, DD News on both days for discussions on the Trump visit, 24-25 February 2020.
2. 'The China-India Rivalry in the Globalization Era' by T. V. Paul (Ed.), Book Review published in Indian Foreign Affairs Journal Vol. 14, No. 1 - January-March 2019, 28 September 2019.
3. 'Taiwan's Position on the Indo-Pacific', Published in Kalinga International Foundation, 15 October 2019.

## Dr Arpita Mitra - Research Fellow, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Inter-religious education in a post-secular world: the Relevance of the Radhakrishnan Commission's Recommendations in the Indian context' in Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, special issue 'Interreligious Dialogue: From Religion to Geopolitics', edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Andrew Lynch, Leiden: Brill 2019, 15 July 2019.
2. 'Maya: A Conceptual History' (Published in Prabuddha Bharata, Special Issue: Visions of Advaita, 125(1), January 2020, pp. 266-275.)
3. 'We must create a history of India in living terms: Patrick Geddes and Aspects of Sister Nivedita's Writings on Indian History', in Rita Banerjee, ed., Cultural Histories of India: Subaltern Representations, Peripheral Genres and Alternate Historiography, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020.

### Television Appearances

1. Spoke as a panelist on 'Janpaksh, episode Vivekananda aur yuva' at Lok Sabha TV, 10-12 January 2020.
2. Online module 'Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) in Indian History: A Re-evaluation' for Annual Refresher Program in Teaching (ARPIT) 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, March 2020.

## Dr Teshu Singh - Research Fellow, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'India-China Relations through the Prism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation - 2019'. (Published in India-China Chronicle), 31 July 2019.

### Participation in Conferences

1. Presented a paper on 'Socio-Economic Reforms in India', in a conference on 'China-India Interaction: from Bilateral to Regional Level' held at Sichuan University, Chengdu, China, 27 April 2019.

## Aayush Mohanty - Research Associate, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'India's security interests vis-a-vis the US' Hobson's choice!', Published in The Economic Times, 20 June 2019.
2. 'Is Huawei's Offer One India Cannot Refuse?', Published in The Diplomat, 28 June 2019.
3. 'Act Far-East could create a nexus between India, Russia and Japan', Published in The Economic Times, 18 September 2019.
4. 'Clouds over Modi-Xi summit scheduled in October', Published in India China Chronicle, July-August 2019 Issue, 24 September 2019.
5. 'UK-India maritime cooperation in Indo-Pacific; would the British commit?', Published in The Economic Times, 30 December 2019.
6. 'US refocus on Indo-Pacific: A quagmire for India?', Published in The Economic Times, 05 January 2020.

## Dr Yatharth Kachiar - Research Associate, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Narcotics-Terrorism nexus: Obstacle to peace in Afghanistan' published in Defence and Diplomacy, Vol. 8, No.4, July-September 2019, ISSN: 2347-3703.

2. Co-authored an article titled 'Turkey's S-400 deal: Deeper into the Russian orbit?' published in Defence and Diplomacy, Vol. 9, No.1, October-December 2019, ISSN: 2347-3703.
3. 'Finally, Islamic State's Caliph is Dead! - an initial Assessment', Published in The Kootneeti, 19 November 2019.

## Dr Pravesh Gupta - Research Associate, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'India-Uzbekistan Strategic Partnership: An Appraisal', Published in World Focus (Volume 40 (8) ISSN: 2230-5083), August 2019.
2. 'Second Informal Modi-Xi Summit: A Forward Movement in India and China Relations' Published in India-China Chronicle, September-October 2019.
3. 'Chinese Ascendancy in Central Asia' Published in India-China Chronicle, September- October 2019.
4. 'Pashtunistan Factor in Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations', Published in Journal of Himalayan and Central Asian Studies, Vol. 23 No. 3-4 (Pages: 96-123), July -December 2019.
5. 'UAE-India Trade and Economic Relations', Published in Diplomacy and Beyond Plus Magazine (ISSN: 2581-8929), December 2019.

### Participation in Conferences

1. Presented a paper on 'Historical Development and Nation Building Process in Tajikistan', at an International Seminar on 'India-Tajikistan Relations, Retrospect and Prospects', organised by India-Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi, 31 January 2020.

## Anurag Sharma - Research Associate, VIF

### Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals

1. 'Counter-Terrorism Framework of the United Nations and India's approach of De-Radicalisation', published by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, 12 September 2019.
2. 'Radical Islam in the Maldives: Hotbed for Al-Qaida and Islamic State', Published in The Kootneeti, 17 October 2019.

### Participation in Conferences

1. Attended the International Conference on 'Implementing the Christchurch Call: Towards a Global CVE Agenda, Tackling Insurgent Ideologies 2.0', New Delhi, India, 08-09 August 2019.
2. Presented a Paper on 'Counter-Terrorism Framework of the United Nations and India's Approach of De-Radicalisation' at the International Conference on 'Counter-Terrorism, De-Radicalisation, and Human Rights Protection' at Urumqi, Xinjiang Province in the People's Republic of China, 03-07 September 2019.
3. Attended a National Security Seminar 2019 on 'Transnational Terrorism-Evolving Threats & Responses' at The United Service Institution of India (USI), New Delhi, 07-08 November 2019.
4. Attended a Seminar on 'Cyber Security', organised by the Economic and Trade Mission-the Embassy of Israel and the ORF, New Delhi, 16-17 December 2019.
5. Attended a Seminar on 'Synergising Security Cooperation between India and the Republic of Korea', organised by the IPCS and the Embassy of Republic of Korea, New Delhi, India, 19 December 2019.
6. Attended the 20th International NSG (National Security Guard) Seminar on 'Comprehending the evolving contours of terrorism and IED threat-Way ahead for the security community', at the NSG Campus (Manesar) and Manekshaw Centre (Delhi), India, 12-13 February 2020.
7. Made a presentation on 'Radicalisation in India and Regional Security Threats', at The British High Commission, New Delhi, 28 February 2020.

## Amruta Karambelkar - Research Associate, VIF

### Participation in Conferences

1. Attended a talk on 'Geo-Politics of Indo-Pacific Region' by Dr Ashley Tellis, at CENJOWS, 01 April 2019.

2. Attended a seminar on 'India-Vietnam Maritime Cooperation: Exploring Convergences', organised by NMF and Embassy of Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 23 April 2019.
3. Presentation at 'BIMSTEC Track 1.5 Security Dialogue' at Dhaka, Bangladesh, 30-31 July 2019.
4. Attended a roundtable discussion on 'India-Indonesia relations: Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic ties', organised by DPG and Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 27 August 2019.
5. Attended a Coastal Security Workshop for BIMSTEC Countries, organised by Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region, 20-22 November 2019.
6. Attended a Book Release and Discussion on 'Act East to Act Indo-Pacific: India's Expanding Neighbourhood' at RIS, 29 January 2020.

#### **Amb D P Srivastava - Distinguished Fellow, VIF**

##### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'Nehru's Himalayan UN gaffe: File on permanent UNSC membership offer to India must be traced and declassified', Published in Times of India, 15 May 2019.
2. 'Rising tensions in the Gulf: US sanctions and Iran's response point to looming danger', Published in Financial Times, 20 May 2019.
3. 'Why India needs to ramp up nuclear power: All you need to know', Published in Business Standard, 06 July 2019.

#### **Amb Asoke Mukerji - Distinguished Fellow, VIF**

##### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'Indian Foreign Policy during Modi 2.0', Published in All India Radio World Service, 28 May 2019.
2. 'India's Diplomatic Victory In ICJ', Published in Air World Service Blog, 18 July 2019.

3. 'The G-7 Summit', Published in Air World Service Blog, 27 August 2019.
4. 'Prioritising Strategic Economic Cooperation', Published in The Pioneer, 22 September 2019.
5. 'Reaffirming 'faith to multilateralism': India at the 74th UN General Assembly', Published in ETV Bharat, 23 September 2019.

#### **Amb Anil Wadhwa - Distinguished Fellow, VIF**

##### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'India and the South Pacific', Published in Institute of South Asia Studies, 29 April 2019.
2. 'Rise in Iran-US tensions has harmed Indian strategic interests in Chabahar', Published in The Asian Age, 03 July 2019.
3. 'Budget 2019: Indian diplomacy needed a shot in the arm but budget flatters to deceive', Published in Financial Express, 09 July 2019.
4. 'Navigating Indo-Pacific: India's Strategy', Published in India Writes Network, 14 August 2019.
5. 'India's decision to stay out of RCEP: what does the future hold?', Published in Financial Express, 06 November 2019.

##### **Television Appearances**

1. Discussion on 'Significance of inviting the BIMSTEC nations for the oath-taking ceremony', CNBC-TV, 29 May 2019.
2. Interview on 'Red Cross was point of contact with Indian Nurses taken Hostage by Daesh In Iraq in 2014' in Strategic News International, 03 November 2019.

#### **Amb Anil Trigunayat - Distinguished Fellow, VIF**

##### **Articles | OPEDS in Indian main stream Media | Journals**

1. 'India and Africa: The way forward for two potential economic giants', Published in Financial Express, 14 May 2019.

2. 'Proposed Palestine-Israel Deal of the Century: America's shot at solving century-old issue', Published in Financial Express, 24 June 2019.
3. 'Updating foreign policy with times, India changing gears in relations with Africa', Published in Financial Express, 09 July 2019.
4. 'PM Modi's Middle-East diplomacy: Reinforcing relationship with the Gulf', Published in Financial Express, 26 August 2019.
5. 'Israel-Arab relationship: The woes of the West Bank', Published in Financial Express, 12 September 2019.
6. The Vanilla Shake! India continues its African engagement to strengthen ties', Published in The Financial Express, 17 October 2019.

#### Television Appearances

1. Discussion on 'AIDIA Dialogue Episode 6', AIDIA YouTube Channel, 05 June 2019.

## Top 5 Articles | Commentaries

(based on Views and Downloads)

S. No	Title	Author	Views
1	Cyber Wargame - An Indian Scenario	Maj Gen P K Mallick, VSM (Retd)	7024
2	Nano-Technology and its Military Application	Maj Gen P K Chakravorty (Retd)	6062
3	Raising 'Myanmar Consciousness': Visit of the President of Myanmar to India	Jaideep Chanda	4465
4	Sri Lanka-US military Ties in the Indo-Pacific	Mayuri Mukherjee	3875
5	Historical Perspective on Ancient and Medieval Sino-India Wars	Colonel D Lakshmana Kumar	3850

## Top 5 videos watched

S. No	Title	Views
1	Inaugural Address by <b>Shri S Gurumurthy</b> , Chairman, VIF on ' <b>Relevance, Context and Importance of Indian Ethos in Management and Business</b> ' (18 September 2019)	16,389
2	<b>Samvad III</b> - Special Address by <b>Jamyang Tsering Namgyal</b> , Member of Parliament (Ladakh) at Mongolia (September 2019)	6,247
3	Release & discussion on ' <b>Caste as Social Capital</b> ' authored by <b>R Vaidyanathan</b> released by <b>Shri S Gurumurthy</b> , Chairman, VIF (9 April 2019)	5,872
4	Vimarsh on ' <b>Why Triple Talaq should be made a punishable offense</b> ' by <b>Arif Mohammad Khan</b> , Former Union Cabinet Minister (19 July 2019)	3524
5	Discussion on ' <b>Politics of Opportunism</b> ' (a VIF Publication authored by <b>R N P Singh</b> ) Special address by <b>Shri S Gurumurthy</b> , Chairman, VIF (27 Dec 2019)	3058

# Finances

Vivekananda International Foundation, created under the aegis of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, was registered as a Trust on 25 March 2010 at New Delhi. The trust holds its meetings periodically.

The Annual Audited Accounts for the financial year 2019-20 is presented here.

## VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

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

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 2020.

PARTICULARS	SCHEDULE	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
<b>SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>			
Corpus & Non-Corpus Fund	"A"	19,242	27,774
<b>TOTAL ::</b>		<b>₹ 19,242</b>	<b>₹ 27,774</b>
<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>			
Fixed Assets	"B"	7,825	8,845
Investment	"C"	2,000	7,000
Current Assets	"D"		
- Advances, Deposits & Receivables		743	786
- Cash & Bank Balances		9,171	13,734
		<u>9,914</u>	<u>14,520</u>
Less: Current Liabilities	"E"		
- Other Liabilities		497	2,591
		<u>497</u>	<u>2,591</u>
		9,417	11,929
<b>TOTAL ::</b>		<b>₹ 19,242</b>	<b>₹ 27,774</b>
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, B.Com(Hons), LL.B, FCA, MBF, ISA  
Partner  
Membership No.054763



New Delhi, Wednesday, The 10th day of June 2020

For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Dr. Arvind Gupta  
Director

Kishor Purohit  
Managing Trustee

Anuttama  
Anuttama Ganguly  
Secretary



**VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION**

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

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 2020**

PARTICULARS	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
<b>[A] INCOME</b>		
Donations	36,000	51,800
Bank Interest	894	794
Publications Royalty	40	109
Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	8,532	-
<b>TOTAL ::</b>	<b>₹ 45,466</b>	<b>₹ 52,703</b>
<b>[B] EXPENDITURE</b>		
Audit Fees	65	65
Bank Commission & Charges	9	9
Conferences, Seminars, Vimarsha & Other Activities	3,319	4,832
Corona Preventive Expenses	21	-
Depreciation	1,459	1,659
Gardening Expenses	682	653
General up-keep and Cleaning Expenses	2,610	2,500
History Project Expenses	292	1,358
Honorarium, Salaries, Fees & Stipend	22,540	22,818
Initiative on Conflict Avoidance & Environment Conciousness-IHBC	4,964	266
Insurance Charges	3	2
Interest on TDS	-	6
Legal & Professional Fees	63	92
Library Expenses	1,857	1,978
Office Expenses	300	288
Postage & Courier Charges	50	23
Power, Fuel Charges & Expenses	2,173	2,191
Printing & Stationery	371	276
Publication Expenses	1,176	852
Repairing & Maintenance Expenses	994	1,716
Security Services Expenses	1,402	995
Scholarship for Field Trip Courses	-	50
Telephone, Mobile & Internet Expenses	179	181
Travelling & Conveyance Exp.	579	295
Water Charges	42	86
Website Renewal & Maintenance Charges	316	301
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year	-	9,211
<b>TOTAL ::</b>	<b>₹ 45,466</b>	<b>₹ 52,703</b>
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, MBF, ISA  
Partner  
Membership No.054763



New Delhi, Wednesday, The 10th day of June, 2020.

For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Dr. Arvind Gupta  
Director

Kishor Tokekar  
Managing Trustee

Anuttama  
Anuttama Ganguly  
Secretary



If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: “ Help and not Fight,” “Assimilation and not Destruction,”

“Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.”

- Swami Vivekananda

I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me: that bharat mata has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace & benediction.

- Swami Vivekananda



## Vivekananda International Foundation

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