



*Conference Booklet*

**7<sup>th</sup> South Asia Conference**

**on**

***India & South Asia: Exploring  
Regional Perceptions***

**October 30-31, 2013**

**Organised by**



**Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi**



## *Contents*

About IDSA	5
About South Asia Conference	7
Concept Note	8
Conference Programme	12
Profiles of Participants & Abstracts	17
Conference Team	69
Helpline	74





## ***About IDSA***

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security. Since its inception, IDSA has served as a forum to debate important aspects of national and international security. Its mission is to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues.

IDSA was established as a registered society in New Delhi on November 11, 1965. The initiative for setting up the Institute came from then Defence Minister Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan, who was one of the Institute's founding members. Over the last forty-plus years, IDSA has played a crucial role in shaping India's foreign and security policies, including with respect to nuclear weapons, military expenditure, and conventional and non-conventional threats to India.

IDSA has a well-qualified multi-disciplinary research faculty drawn from academia, defence forces and the civil services, and which represent a diversity of views. Research at the Institute is driven by a comprehensive agenda and by the need to provide impartial analyses and policy recommendations. IDSA's journals, monographs, briefs, and books are the principal mediums through which these analyses and policy recommendations are disseminated.



## **Research Clusters**

- East Asia
- South Asia
- Military Affairs
- North America
- Internal Security
- Europe and Eurasia
- West Asia
- Strategic Technologies
- Non-Traditional Security
- Nuclear and Arms Control
- Southeast Asia and Oceania
- Defence Economics & Industry
- Africa, Latin America, Caribbean & UN



## ***About South Asia Conference***

The South Asia Conference is organised by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi. The annual South Asia Conference is an endeavour of the institute to bring together experts from all the neighbouring countries and discuss with them issues of contemporary relevance in an increasingly interdependent South Asia.

Since the countries in the South Asian region not only share many features of governance and structures but face similar challenges, the IDSA conferences have attempted to engage policy makers, academics, civil society actors and young professionals in a dialogue on key issues of concern with the objective of achieving sustainable peace and security. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> South Asia Conference.

Previous South Asia Conferences have dealt with the following issues.

- Economic Cooperation for Security & Development in South Asia
- Changing Political Context in India's Neighbourhood and Prospects of Security and Regional Cooperation
- South Asia 2020: Towards Cooperation or Conflict?
- The Common Challenge of Terrorism in South Asia and Prospect of Regional Cooperation
- Cooperative Security Framework for South Asia
- Prospects for Stability and Growth in South Asia



## Concept Note

India, in view of its geographical vastness, huge population and massive natural resources, is often seen as overbearing in the region. Its smaller neighbours have responded to the natural asymmetry more or less in similar ways in their bilateral engagements with India. At a more nuanced level, a perceived sense of insecurity *vis-à-vis* India often gives way to aggressive posturing particularly by countries still grappling with complex issues pertaining formation of national identity and state consolidation. Unresolved border issues leading to protracted territorial disputes, including concerns over sharing of river waters and maritime resources, coupled with huge imbalances in trade, is often used for cultivating negative stereotypes and unfounded or inflated threat perceptions. Some of these issues have largely shaped the general perception and the prevalent social and political narratives about India in much of its immediate neighbourhood.

As the only country having borders with all other South Asian countries, most of whom do not share borders with one another — and the largest one at that in terms of size and population— India has often been the target of persistent criticism despite the fact that it has sought to build friendly or at least a working relationship with all its neighbours by taking non-reciprocal economic and political measures in recent years.

Perceptions play a very significant role in the South Asian politics. They have largely shaped and influenced state policies and politics among South Asian countries, especially in relation to India and *vice versa*, over the last many decades. State policies have at times been hostage to negative or adversarial perceptions, well-entrenched in the popular psyche. As one delves into the complexities involved in the shaping of perceptions among countries in South Asia, one realises that it is an extremely dynamic process that has evolved differently in different countries. Perceptions among states are not static and have often changed with the shifts in global as well as regional politics. There are myriad stakeholders— with their sectional





interests and concerns— playing their role explicitly or implicitly in shaping and influencing mutual perceptions among countries in South Asia. Modern communications technology and expanded media networks have often reinforced old perceptions and inhibited the process of regional integration.

India, on its part, too faces a complex set of challenges due to the fact that negative perceptions about it are engendered by powerful vested interests in the neighbouring states. Most of its neighbours are also in a state of major social-political ferment and transition, and are up against a wide array of internal challenges. Due to their tense and fragile ties with India, most of them have not been able to participate in, and benefit from, the Indian economy, which is growing at a fast pace.

Regional initiatives and groupings, such as, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have had varying success in building an abiding cooperative framework to address certain issues of common concern to the countries of the region. There can be no doubt that over the centuries, the region has acquired an inherently diverse and yet a distinct multi-layered geo-cultural identity. The impact of British colonialism in the evolution of the South Asian region has proved to be enduring and irreversible. The European concepts of political organisation, territoriality and nationality have left an indelible mark on state formation in the post-colonial period.

Historically, the emergence of new states in the region in the post-colonial period with exclusive notions of identity, citizenship and nationality within fixed well-defined borders, and geo-political and economic asymmetry among them, has imparted an altogether new dynamics to the region. In such a setting, perceptions about each other changed as old historical narratives were replaced by exclusive, imagined and sponsored histories, often categorised in terms of 'us' and 'them'. This has often resulted in general apathy and lingering tension among the states despite a shared sense of history and geography amongst the people of the region.

In view of the asymmetry in size and capabilities, India too faces a



major policy dilemma when it comes to responding to any crisis in its immediate neighbourhood, lest it stokes 'anti-India' sentiments and further complicates the situation. Interestingly, India, at the same time, is not expected to remain a mute spectator either. The challenges of how India should respond or what should be the nature and level of its intervention, if needed, has often confounded India's policy and decision makers.

Although there are certain realities and factors that are unalterable, such as, shared geography or the fundamentals of geo-economics—irrespective of how national interests are defined or on what terms states or their key institutions interact within the region—a regional approach to addressing regional issues remain elusive. India's thrust on strengthening intra-regional trade through increased connectivity and unilateral concessions has at best yielded mixed results. South Asia largely remains mired in protracted conflicts and chronic socio-economic challenges, which require each country in the region to constantly evaluate their position and policy in relation to India and *vice versa*.

On the basis of the findings of the last six annual conferences that the *Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses (IDSA)* has been organising since 2007, it was felt that a detailed assessment of various perceptions about India that prevails in its immediate neighbourhood is critical for Indian policy makers to devise appropriate measures to enable and strengthen the process of regional cooperation and integration. Thus, the objective of this year's South Asia Conference, seventh in series, is to isolate and identify political and economic perceptions about India in South Asia and *vice versa*.

**The two-day conference would seek to examine and address the following set of queries and issues:**

- (i) What are the various perceptions about India in each of the neighbouring South Asian countries? How do other countries in the region look at India's economic power? Is India perceived as a reluctant or an unreliable partner in the development of the region? Has India failed to relate and connect to its immediate neighbourhood?



- (ii) Which are the key institutions and forces shaping perceptions about India in the neighbouring countries? What has been the role of media in shaping or perpetuating the prevalent perceptions? How perceptions have defined or transformed the inter-state relations in South Asia?
- (iii) What are the Indian perceptions of its 'neighbourhood' and its approaches to the individual countries in South Asia? Has the region failed to connect to India, and to identify with its rising political and economic profile?
- (iv) How best India can manage or improve its perceptions among its South Asian neighbours? What role India should play to make regional cooperation a success? What should be India's long-term approach in this regard?



# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## DAY ONE (Wednesday, October 30, 2013)

- 09:30 - 10:00 AM**      **Registration/Arrival of Guests**
- 10.00-10.30 AM**      **Inaugural Session**
- 10:00**                      Welcome Remarks by Dr. Arvind Gupta  
Director General, IDSA
- 10:10**                      Inaugural Address by Shri A.K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Raksha Mantri
- 10:25**                      Vote of Thanks by Brig. (Retd.) Rumel  
Dahiya, Deputy Director General, IDSA
- 10:30 - 11:00 AM**      **Tea/Coffee**
- 11:00 AM- 01:30 PM** **Session I: Shaping of Perceptions in  
South Asia**

*The session seeks to identify key drivers, institutions and stakeholders and their role in the shaping of perceptions among states in South Asia*

**Moderator: Professor S.D. Muni**

- Dr. Dayan Jayatileka**                      *The Geostrategic Matrix and Existential Dimension of Sri Lanka's Conflict, Post-war Crisis & External Relations*
- Amb. Humayun Kabir**                      *How Bangladesh Perceives India: Recent Trends*
- Dr. Pratyoush Onta**                      *Does Academia Matter to the Shaping of Mutual Perceptions in South Asia?*
- Dr. Yaqoob Khan Bangash**                      *'Not India': Pakistan, India and the Self*
- Discussion*

**01:30 - 02:30 PM**      **Lunch**



## 02:30 - 05:00 PM Session II: Mutual Perceptions and Inter-State Relations

*The session intends to explore how mutual perceptions have influenced the inter-state relations in South Asia.*

**Moderator: Professor Veena Sikri**

**Dr. Davood Moradian**                      *India & Afghanistan: Unrealised Opportunities*

**Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai**                      *Nepal-India Relations: Changing Dynamics*

**Mr. M. Ashique Rahman**                      *Rising India and Bangladesh-India Relations: Mutual Perceptions and Expectations*

**Prof. Partha S. Ghosh**                      *Perceptions and Memories: Making Sense of Bangladesh's India Outlook*

*Discussion*



## DAY TWO (Thursday, October 31, 2013)

09:30 - 10:00 AM Tea/Coffee

### 10:00 AM- 12:30 PM Session III: Perceptions on Regional Cooperation

*The session proposes to discuss and examine the various perceptions about regional cooperation among the South Asian states. What is the scope and prospects for increased regional cooperation?*

**Moderator: Ambassador Sheel Kant Sharma**

**Prof. S.D. Muni** *China and South Asian Cooperation*

**Mr. Khadim Hussain** *Way Forward to Regional Cooperation in South Asia*

**Prof. I.N. Mukherji** *India's Trade with South Asian Neighbours: Perceptions and Reality-with Special Reference to India-Pakistan Trade*

**Mr. G. I. Lynn Ockersz** *Stepped-up Inter-State Dialogue as a Key to Improving SAARC Development Prospects*

*Discussion*

12:30 - 01:30 PM Lunch

### 01:30-04:00 PM Session IV: India & South Asia: Perceptions and Expectations

*The session will be devoted to discussing regional perceptions about India and expectations regarding India's role in the region.*

**Moderator: Gen. (Retd.) Ashok K. Mehta**

**Mr. Shahmahmood Miakhel** *Seizing New Opportunity for Regional Cooperation and Understanding*

**Mr. Pema Tenzin** *Bhutan and Its International Collaborations 2013*



**U. Denzil Abel**

*Myanmar's Perceptions of India*

**Mr. Mohamed  
Naahee Naseem**

*Maldives' General Perceptions of India  
and the Role of Media*

*Discussion*

**04:00 - 04:15 PM**

**Tea/Coffee**

**04:15 - 05:30 PM Concluding Session: Managing Perceptions:  
The Way Forward**

*In the concluding session, the panellists will offer their opinion on how to manage regional perceptions and recommend the way forward for the consideration of policy makers.*

**Moderator: Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director General IDSA**

**- Panel Discussion**

**Vote of Thanks:** Mr. Vishal Chandra, Conference Coordinator







***Profiles of Participants***  
***&***  
***Abstracts***



## **A. K. ANTONY**

Hon'ble Union Defence Minister  
Government of India, New Delhi  
Email: [ak.antony@sansad.nic.in](mailto:ak.antony@sansad.nic.in)



Born on December 28, 1940, Arakkaparambil Kurian Antony hails from Cherthala in Alappuzha District of Kerala. Presently the Union Defence Minister of India, for a second stint, A.K. Antony has held several important positions. He had earlier been the Union Cabinet Minister of Civil Supplies Consumer Affairs & Public Distribution from 1993-95. A member of the ruling Indian National Congress, he is presently a Member of Parliament in the Upper House (Rajya Sabha). He has earlier been a Rajya Sabha MP - from 1985-91, from 1991-95, 2005-10 and re-elected for another term from 2010-16. He has served as the General Secretary of All India Congress Committee from 1984-87. A.K. Antony has been the Chief Minister of Kerala thrice. He has also been a member of Kerala Legislative Assembly for five terms and the President of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee from 1973-77, from 1978-82 and again from 1987-92. Fond of reading, he worked as the Editor of a Malayalam weekly publication – “KALASALA” – from 1964-66. He was also the Editor of a Malayalam daily – “VEEKSHANAM” – from 1978-82. Widely travelled, A.K. Antony has visited Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea, Oman, France, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Malaysia, United States, Singapore, Maldives, Japan & Russia.



## **ARVIND GUPTA**

Director General  
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi, India  
Email: [directorgeneral.idsa@gmail.com](mailto:directorgeneral.idsa@gmail.com)



Dr. Arvind Gupta assumed charge as Director General of IDSA on January 5, 2012. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and M.Sc. in Physics from Delhi University. He was Visiting Member at the Tata Institute for Fundamental Research (1974-76) and served at the Oil & Natural Gas Commission (1976) and at the State Bank of India (1976-79) before joining the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1979. He retired from the IFS in 2013, having worked in the Ministry of External Affairs in different capacities and served in diplomatic missions in Moscow, London and Ankara. He held the Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair on National Security at the IDSA from 2008 to 2011. Prior to joining the IDSA, he was Joint Secretary at the Indian National Security Council Secretariat from 1999 to 2007. During his tenure at the NSCS he dealt with a wide range of international and national security issues and participated in the various working groups and task forces set up by the NSC. He also worked with the Kargil Review Committee. At the IDSA he headed the South Asia and Internal Security Centres and edited the Institute's flagship bi-monthly journal, Strategic Analysis.

His current interests include the international security issues, India's foreign policy, energy security, climate change, technology & internal security issues. He has three books, several edited books and a number of academic publications to his credit. He has been a member of several task forces on issues such as space security, climate change, cyber security, nuclear disarmament etc.



## **RUMEL DAHIYA**

Deputy Director General  
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi, India  
Email: ddgidsa11@gmail.com



Brig. Rumel Dahiya retired as head of the Directorate of Net Assessment at Integrated Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces in 2009 and joined IDSA in February 2010. He is currently Deputy Director General, IDSA. He has served as a Defence Attaché to Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, and with the Indian Military Training Team in Bhutan. He also served with the Military Operations Directorate of the Indian Army. He has had extensive command and staff experience during his 32 year military career, including in counter-insurgency situations. He is a graduate of the National Defence College and Defence Services Staff College. He was awarded the Sword of Honour and Gold Medal from Indian Military Academy at his commissioning. Brig. Dahiya has also been a member of the Board of Studies of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, since December 2011. He works on military affairs and on issues related to the Middle East.





***Session I***

***Shaping of Perceptions in South Asia***

***Wednesday, October 30, 2013***

***11:00 am - 01:30 pm***

## DAYAN JAYATILLEKA

Former Permanent Representative  
of Sri Lanka to the UN  
Colombo, Sri Lanka  
Email: [dayanjayatileka@yahoo.com](mailto:dayanjayatileka@yahoo.com)



Dr. Dayan Jayatilleka was Sri Lanka's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France, Portugal and Spain and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO until January 2013. He was Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in Geneva (2007-09) and was a Vice-President of the UN Human Rights Council. He was appointed Chairman of the Governing body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2007. He was Minister of Planning and Youth Affairs in the North-East Provincial Council of Sri Lanka (1988-89). Dr. Jayatilleka is a political scientist, author and commentator. He received a First Class Honors Degree from the University of Peradeniya, M.Phil from University of Colombo, and a Ph.D. from Griffith University, Brisbane. He was also a Fulbright Scholar in 1982-83.

His publications include "The Travails of a Democracy: Unfinished War, Protracted Crisis" (1995); "Fidel's Ethics of Violence: The Moral Dimension of the Political Thought of Fidel Castro" (2007). Dr. Dayan Jayatilleka's latest book is "Long War, Cold Peace: Conflict and Crisis in Sri Lanka", Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2013.





# ***The Geostrategic Matrix and Existential Dimension of Sri Lanka's Conflict, Post-war Crisis & External Relations***

*Dayan Jayatilleka*

The unique importance of the Indian factor in Sri Lanka's external relations is best evidenced in the fact that Sri Lanka is simply indescribable without reference to India. The inevitable asymmetry inherent in the Indo-Lanka equation is similarly evidenced in the fact that India is easily describable without reference to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has been defined by India but it has also defined itself, demarcated itself, as against India. It is this dialectical relationship with India that has been the most important single geopolitical component in Sri Lanka's evolution. In a strange inversion, the domestic geopolitics of the island of Sri Lanka is the reverse, an upside down image, of its giant neighbour India. In India the Southern-most part contains Tamil Nadu; on the island of Sri Lanka, separated from India by a very thin strip of water, it is exactly the opposite. It is the Northern tip that is pre-eminently Tamil. Given the demographic reality of an ethnic group that cuts across the borders of India and Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's Tamil issue is for Sri Lanka an internal problem with an external dimension, while for India it is an external problem with an internal (Tamil Nadu) dimension. Given its aloneness on India's doorstep, Sri Lanka cannot afford to sustain a negative strategic relationship with India. For this reason too, it has to resolve the problem with its own Tamil minority.



## **M. HUMAYUN KABIR**

Vice President, Bangladesh Enterprise  
Institute (BEI)  
Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Email: kabirh60@gmail.com



Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir is the Vice President of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), Dhaka. A career diplomat, Mr. Kabir retired from government service as Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, in September 2010. His last foreign assignment was in Washington, D.C., as Ambassador of Bangladesh to the United States. Mr. Kabir also served as Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal and High Commissioner to Australia and New Zealand and as Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata, India. He has also served, in various capacities, in the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, D.C., Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York and Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, among others. He also advises UNDP and other business consultancies in Bangladesh and abroad.

Before joining the diplomatic service, Mr. Kabir was a faculty member at the Department of Political Science and the Department of Law, University of Dhaka, from 1977 to 1980. He has several publications to his credit and writes regularly in various newspapers. He is also a regular commentator for media outlets in Bangladesh and abroad on contemporary issues.



## ***How Bangladesh Perceives India: Recent Trends***

*M. Humayun Kabir*

Perception formation is a complex process, more so in South Asia where history, geography, myths, legends and day to day events can mix together to affect the process. The evolving nature of identity formation in all South Asian nations makes such a process more complicated. In the wake of its independence in 1971, Bangladesh constructed a positive perception about India based on shared aspirations, social convergence, unhindered connectivity between people and a joint struggle for achieving its independence. However, over subsequent years, as India started pursuing its realist instincts in Bangladesh, their perceptions about each other started diverging. Internal transformations in India added new complexity to its image in the region, including in Bangladesh. The present government in Bangladesh took some initiatives to break the existing perception frame through offering unilateral concessions to India on issues of vital interest to itself. However, India's repeated inability to deliver on many of its landmark promises and its efforts to often gain unilateral concessions have continued to generate mixed perceptions in Bangladesh. Also, a poor communication strategy could not foster a positive perception about India despite the fact that most Bangladeshi people perceive India as an economic partner, ready to engage with it in mutually beneficial transactions. Given the fact that multiple factors can influence the shaping of perceptions, systematic, sustained, collaborative, participatory and inclusive efforts are required to steer this process toward achieving desired outcomes.



## PRATYOUSH ONTA

Chair, Martin Chautari  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: [sinhas@mos.com.np](mailto:sinhas@mos.com.np)



Pratyoush Onta has a Ph.D. in History from the University of Pennsylvania (1996). He has written about Nepali nationalism, Gurkha history, institutions, area studies, the politics of knowledge production and the media. He has written, edited and co-edited several books including "Nepal Studies in the UK" (2004), "Social History of Radio Nepal" (2004, in Nepali), "Social Scientific Thinking in the Context of Nepal" (2004, in Nepali), "Radio Journalism: News and Talk Programs in FM Radio" (2005, in Nepali), "Growing up with Radio" (2005, in Nepali), "Mass Media in Post-1990 Nepal" (2006), "Ten Years of Independent Radio: Development, Debates and the Public Interest" (2008, in Nepali), "Autocratic Monarchy: Politics in Panchayat Nepal" (2012) and "Post-1990 History of Nepali Magazines" (forthcoming, in Nepali). He is also the founding editor of the journals "Studies in Nepali History and Society" (est. 1996) and "Media Adhyayan" (est. 2006, in Nepali). He has been associated with the research institute and public forum Martin Chautari in Kathmandu since 1995 and is currently its chair.



## ***Does Academia Matter to the Shaping of Mutual Perceptions in South Asia?***

*Pratyoush Onta*

By examining the case of how Nepal is studied in India and how India is (not) researched in Nepal, this paper argues that the state of South Asian Studies in the countries of the region leaves a lot to be desired. It further examines the historical causes and factors that explain the poor state of academic research about other countries in the region and suggests that this status quo will have to be greatly improved upon if academia is to matter in the shaping of mutual perceptions in South Asia. The paper ends by suggesting a few things that could be done to get us moving in that direction.



## YAQOOB KHAN BANGASH

Chairman, Department of History  
Forman Christian College  
Lahore, Pakistan  
Email: yaqoob.bangash@gmail.com



Dr. Yaqoob Khan Bangash is an Assistant Professor and Chairman of the Department of History, Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan. His research interests lie in the formation of the post-colonial state, questions of identity, rise of regional nationalisms and insurgency, and human rights. His first book is entitled “Subjects to Citizens: Accession and Integration of the Princely States of Pakistan, 1947-55” (forthcoming in fall 2013, published by Oxford University Press). He is currently working on a monograph on the imagination of Pakistan as a country, using the debates of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (1947-56) as the primary text and focusing on issues relating to the understanding of Islam, democracy, politics and governance in the new nation. He is also the official historian of Forman Christian College and is working towards publishing a history of the College. He is also working on research entitled, “From Converts to Community: The Creation of a Christian Community in the Punjab, 1849-1947,” which examines the formation of a Christian community in northern India. He has received a British Library Endangered Archives grant to initiate preservation of documents essential for this research. Dr. Bangash also writes regularly for *The Express Tribune*, *The News* and various other news magazines throughout South Asia. He has also previously published in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* and *South Asia Research*.



## ***'Not India': Pakistan, India and the Self***

*Yaqoob Khan Bangash*

Born on the same day in August 1947, the modern states of India and Pakistan are practically twin countries that have had pre-conceived notions about each other from inception. Hence, for India, Pakistan was a 'Muslim Pakistan,' and for Pakistan the term 'Hindu' and 'Indian' were synonymous. While India's perception of Pakistan was one among many facets of its identity, Pakistan's perception of India became a defining feature for the new country. Where India claimed the mantle of thousands of years of unbroken history, it was argued that Pakistan had 'seceded' and therefore had to forge an identity anew. Being a new country for the Muslims of India was indeed the battle cry for Pakistan, but being 'Not India' was also a defining factor in the identity formation process of the country. Therefore, the 'perception' of India in Pakistan became, in effect, a reflection on its own identity. This paper will trace the formation and development of Pakistan's 'perception' of India. Using government issued textbooks, official pronouncements, and select literary and news media sources over the years, this paper will focus on how a certain view of India has developed in Pakistan since independence. The paper will focus on what forms this perception takes, how it is articulated, and to what end is it used. The importance of certain institutions in creating and perpetuating perceptions will also be analysed. Finally, the paper will assess how these perceptions affect relations between the two countries and how critical they are for the future of South Asia.







***Session II***

***Mutual Perceptions and Inter-State  
Relations***

***Wednesday, October 30, 2013***

***02:30 - 05:00 pm***



## VEENA SIKRI

Former Ambassador, Government of India  
New Delhi, India  
Email: veenasikri@gmail.com



Professor Veena Sikri currently holds the Ford Foundation endowed Chair at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, where she heads the Bangladesh Studies Programme. Her three-year assignment (2008-2011) as Visiting Senior Research Fellow with the Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, culminated in the recently released book "India & Malaysia: Intertwined Strands". She is Vice Chairperson of the South Asia Foundation (India Chapter), a secular, non-profit and non-political organisation with eight autonomous chapters across South Asia. She conceptualised, and is the Convener of, the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN), which brings together women from nine South Asian countries.

She holds a Master's degree in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. Prior to academia, she served as a career diplomat with the Indian Foreign Service. She was India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh and Malaysia and Consul General in Hong Kong. She has served in Indian Embassies in Moscow, Paris, Kathmandu, and in the Permanent Mission to the UN. She has represented India in the UN Security Council, ECOSOC, UNESCO, and at summit meetings of SAARC and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). She was Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) from 1989 to 1992.



## **DAVOOD MORADIAN**

Director-General  
Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Email: [moradian@bb.roshan.af](mailto:moradian@bb.roshan.af)



Dr. Davood Moradian is the Founder and Director General of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, Kabul. He has worked with the Afghan Government since 2006 in different capacities, including as chief of programs at President Hamid Karzai's office and as chief policy advisor to Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006-11). He also taught International Relations at the University of St. Andrews and the American University of Afghanistan. He earned a doctorate degree from University of St. Andrews, Scotland.



## ***India & Afghanistan: Unrealised opportunities***

*Davood Moradian*

Despite the unprecedented convergence of interests and concerns and shared civilisational heritage, India & Afghanistan's bilateral relations are far from a level of mutual satisfaction or international acceptance and understanding. The two countries are yet to fully utilise their Strategic Partnership Agreement, signed in 2011. Their bilateral relations continue to be questioned by a confused West and de-legitimised by a deceitful Islamabad/Rawalpindi. Undoubtedly Kabul should shoulder some responsibilities for unsatisfactory relations and discouraging signals from New Delhi. But New Delhi's inability to articulate and/or execute an independent, strategic, serious and resourceful strategy for its bilateral relations with Kabul is mainly to blame. On the eve of the drawdown of international troops from Afghanistan and the emerging new political and security environment, Kabul and New Delhi must seize the moment of uncertainty to consolidate and solidify their strategic partnership by combining their national assets. This article briefly provides an overview of Kabul-New Delhi relations in three eras: 2001-2011; 2011-2014, and the post-2014 period.



## DINESH BHATTARAI

Former Ambassador of Nepal to the  
UN and WTO  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: dineshbhattarai1@gmail.com



A career Foreign Service official from 1983 to 2013, Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai has been Nepal's Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the United Nations including the World Trade Organization and International Organizations in Geneva, Rome, and Vienna from 2007 to 2012. Dr. Bhattarai was Ambassador of Nepal to the Swiss Confederation and concurrently accredited to the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Croatia. He was First Secretary (Political Affairs) at the Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi from 1991-1994 and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal in Washington D.C. from 1998-2003, in which he served as Charge d'Affaires *a.i.* from 2000-2001. He also worked at the SAARC in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He headed the Division of South Asia, SAARC and BIMSTEC. Ambassador Bhattarai headed the group of the Least Developed Countries within the UN system in Geneva from 2009-2012. He did his Post Graduate Diploma in International Relations and Development from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague. He obtained his Ph.D. Degree in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has co-authored a book, "Nepal-India: Democracy in the Making of Mutual Trust", Nirala Publications, 1993.



## ***Nepal-India Relations: Changing Dynamics***

*Dinesh Bhattarai*

Nepal's relations with India are intimate, complex and multifaceted, unique in character and scope. Relations have always recognised the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the other, while, over the years, acquiring new dimensions and dynamics. Though Nepal shares borders with India and China, geography, history, security, economic and socio-cultural links make India more important both to the Nepalese Government and people. Relations, though, have reoccurring irritants borne out of misperceptions and conflicting narratives of emerging dynamics. This has caused even the greatest advocates of cordial relations to be swayed by misperceptions. The gap between fact and fiction has blurred necessary debate on core issues and increased their complexity. Since the end of a decade-long armed conflict (from 1996-2005), Nepal has been struggling to institutionalise democracy as the first Constituent Assembly failed to deliver a constitution. It now faces, in November, a rare second Constituent Assembly election in five years. While the prolonged political stalemate continues within Nepal, a number of variables including the reading of political events, knowledge, judgments, capacity, and flexibility to perceive them, have an influence on Nepal-India relations. The paper seeks to analyse historical perceptions, political mindsets, values, beliefs, and attitudes towards these dynamics. It intends to utilise facts from these analyses and look at how the emerging dynamics are at work in shaping Nepal-India relations and can be adjusted to make the most of existing opportunities.



## **M. ASHIQUE RAHMAN**

Research Fellow  
Bangladesh Institute of International and  
Strategic Studies (BISS)  
Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Email: ashique04@gmail.com



Mr. M. Ashique Rahman is a Research Fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), Dhaka. He joined BISS in 2004 as a Research Officer. As a Fulbright Scholar, Mr. Rahman obtained an M.A. degree in International Relations from Boston University, Massachusetts, in 2010. He was also awarded the VLIR-UOS Scholarship by the Belgian Government to attend the International Training Programme (ITP) on “Governing for Development” at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Earlier, he obtained his Master of Social Sciences (MSS) and Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSS) degrees in Political Science from the University of Dhaka. Before joining BISS, Mr. Rahman also worked at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, for a brief period. His areas of expertise are US-South Asia relations, South Asian politics, inter-state relations in South Asia, security issues in South Asia and conventional arms control. He has published many research papers and is currently an Assistant Editor of the BISS journal.





## ***Rising India and Bangladesh-India Relations: Mutual Perceptions and Expectations***

*M. Ashique Rahman*

Relations with India constitute the most important cornerstone of Bangladesh's external relations. Nevertheless, bilateral relations between these two countries have been beset with many strains and tribulations over the last four decades. As is often highlighted, perceptions or, for that matter, misperceptions play significant roles in forming and sustaining constraints in Bangladesh-India relations. This paper analyses the roles of perception and/or misperception in relations, especially in the context of India's contemporary political and economic rise both within the region and on the world stage. Upholding the view that perceptions do matter in foreign relations, the paper seeks to explain some very crucial queries: to what extent do mutual perceptions about each other really impact Bangladesh-India relations? How are perceptions formed and shaped in Bangladesh as far as India and its global rise is concerned? Conversely, how far India's perceptions about Bangladesh expressed in the Indian media contribute to shaping Bangladesh's perception about India? What and who are the key drivers, institutions, actors, and stakeholders forming and shaping these perceptions and with what ends? What role does 'new media', the offspring of modern information and communication technology, play in this regard? And finally, what is the way forward? Would addressing and fulfilling mutual expectations regarding many outstanding bilateral issues and immediate resolution of some very long-standing gridlocks shed misperceptions between these two countries?



## **PARTHA S. GHOSH**

Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial  
Museum and Library  
New Delhi, India  
Email: [parsarg@gmail.com](mailto:parsarg@gmail.com)



Professor Partha S. Ghosh is a Senior Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, and the Editor, *India Quarterly*. Till recently, he was Professor of South Asian Studies at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations Chair on Indian Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Earlier, he was a Visiting Professor at the OKD Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, Research Director at the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Humboldt Fellow at the Heidelberg University, Ford Visiting Scholar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. His academic interests include South Asian politics, ethnicity, majority-minority relations, inter-state migrations, and domestic politics-foreign policy interface. He has a long list of publications, which might be viewed on his website [www.parthasghosh.com](http://www.parthasghosh.com).



## ***Perceptions and Memories: Making Sense of Bangladesh's India Outlook***

*Partha S. Ghosh*

The argument that Bangladeshi society is divided between the 'Bengali nationalists' and 'Bangladeshi nationalists', does not tell the full story. There is a huge cusp zone, otherwise the Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) would not alternate in power. At the core of the present controversy over the issue of dealing with the criminals of 1971 is the question of punishment, pardon and forgiveness. Did Bangladesh forgive war criminals all these years only to suddenly wake up? At the subcutaneous level, the depressing memory remained in the public consciousness though Jamaat and BNP succeeded in obfuscating the discourse by injecting the virus of secularism versus Islam. How can Bangladesh reconcile itself with this baggage of its memory and how would that process influence its India outlook?





***Session III***

***Perceptions on Regional Cooperation***

***Thursday, October 31, 2013***

***10:00 am - 12:30 pm***



## **SHEEL KANT SHARMA**

Former Ambassador and  
Secretary-General of SAARC  
Email: sheelkant@yahoo.com

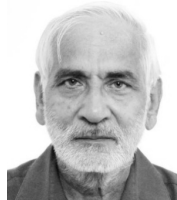


Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma holds a Ph. D in High Energy Physics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, which, in 2007, gave him the Distinguished Alumnus award. He belongs to the 1973 batch of the Indian Foreign Service. He has served as the Indian Ambassador to Vienna and Permanent Representative to all international organisations in Vienna including the IAEA (2004-08), where he served as a Governor on its Board of Governors. He headed the Foreign Office Division dealing with South East Asia and the Pacific during the initial years of India's Look East Policy (1991-94), and served as Joint Secretary (Disarmament & International Security Affairs) and Additional Secretary (International Organisations). He headed the MEA's nonproliferation, disarmament and security division from 2000-04. During his career in the Foreign Service, his diplomatic assignments were to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Geneva, Algeria and Vienna, the last being a stint in the IAEA Secretariat. Dr. Sharma was the Secretary-General of SAARC from 2008-11.



## S.D. MUNI

Research Professor  
Institute of South Asian Studies  
National University of Singapore  
Email: sdmuni@gmail.com



S.D. Muni is a Research Professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore. He served as India's Ambassador to Laos PDR (1997-99) and as India's Special Envoy to Southeast Asian countries on the issue of UN Security Council reform (2005-06). In 2005, the Sri Lankan President bestowed upon him the country's highest civilian honour for a foreign national, the 'Sri Lanka Ratna'. He is affiliated with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, and Monash Asia Institute, Melbourne, as a Fellow. He taught International Studies for 34 years at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and visited, on research assignments, various universities and think tanks in US, UK, Europe, Japan, Australia, West Asia and Southeast Asia. He has authored and edited more than two dozen books and monographs on Indian and Asian foreign and security policies. His latest publications include "India and China: the Next Decade" (co-edited, 2009), "India's Foreign Policy: The Democracy Dimension" (2009), "The Emerging Dimensions of SAARC" (2010), "A Resurgent China: South Asian Perspectives" (co-edited, 2012) and "Asian Strategic Review" (co-edited, 2013).





## ***China and South Asian Cooperation***

*S. D. Muni*

South Asian perceptions of China's role in regional affairs have often been mutually incompatible. Countries like Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have preferred China's participation in SAARC, even as a member, but India and Bhutan have been reluctant in this respect. China's interests and stakes in South Asia have transformed. From that of a distant and new neighbour, seeking stability of its Tibet and Xinjiang periphery, China now seeks extensive reach in the Indian Ocean. China's impressive economic and military rise and its observer status in SAARC also enable China to engage with South Asia in a more effective way. While taking advantage of growing Chinese needs and capabilities, South Asian countries need to carefully draw lessons from China's engagements with its other neighbours. Expansion and consolidation of Chinese stakes in Myanmar have made the latter uncomfortable. China has seldom liked or encouraged democratic systems and open societies in the neighbourhood and its territorial nationalism and regional strategic aspirations have led China to assert and offend its immediate neighbours like Vietnam, Philippines and Japan. In pursuance of its core and principal interests, China also may not hesitate to weaken ASEAN. Let the South Asians pool their assessments and understandings to see what China can and will do to regional cooperation in South Asia.



## **KHADIM HUSSAIN**

Senior Research Fellow  
Institute of Strategic Studies  
Islamabad, Pakistan  
Email: khadimhussain@issi.org.pk



Mr. Khadim Hussain holds two Masters degrees; M.Sc. in Engineering from Lamar University, Texas and an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Houston, Texas. At the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, he spent nine years studying India and wrote seven research papers including "Election 1991 - A Watershed in Indian Polity", "Caste System and Indian Polity" and "Jharkhand Movement in Perspective", while also monitoring the internal affairs of other South Asian countries. As an independent consultant from 2008 to 2013, he conducted multi-disciplinary research on topics such as the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment of Pakistan, the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project and food security issues. He previously worked for Oxfam GB and Action Aid. He has also volunteered for civil society actions in human rights, peace, children rights, women rights, education, the WTO, food security and poverty reduction.



## ***Way Forward to Regional Cooperation in South Asia***

*Khadim Hussain*

During the last two decades, the paradigm of security has been stretched to include trade, ecology, climate, energy, poverty reduction, etc. Imperialist ideologues chose preemptive violence as the tool to gain power in the international arena; this indirectly intensified the hostilities among the already rival countries. South Asia has become a victim of this trend and faces threats to its security. Not only have previous efforts and methods of standard confidence building measures become futile, other sections of state and society have entered the fray to fuel animosity across borders. Now, therefore, more innovative ideas, initiatives and actions are needed to enhance cooperation and peace in the region. The thrust of suggestions for the way forward mainly include initiatives that depend on civil society and not state institutions like ministries, bureaucracies and security forces and their proxies. The presentation mainly puts forward and discusses various ways of promoting people-to-people contact, signing agreements to promote trust between states, promoting protocols for information sharing, recreating SAARC bodies with new mandates, etc.



## INDRA NATH MUKHERJI

Senior Consultant, Research & Information  
System for Developing Countries  
New Delhi, India  
Email: [imukherji@gmail.com](mailto:imukherji@gmail.com)



Professor Indra Nath Mukherji is the former Chairman of the South Asian Studies and Dean of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Senior Consultant, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi. After retiring from JNU in 2008, he became the Regional Editor (India) of the South Asia Economic Journal. He is in the Governing Body of the Centre for International Relations and Community Well Being, Gurgaon. He has completed 22 research projects sponsored by the Committee on Studies for Cooperation in South Asia (CSCD), World Bank, UNESCAP, IDRC, FAO, ADB, ICSSR and SANEI among others. His core interest relates to trade and development issues in South Asia. He has participated widely in national and international conferences and contributed over 100 papers, some of them in peer-reviewed national and international journals. Two of Professor Mukherji's recent publications are: "Deepening Economic Cooperation between India and Sri Lanka" (with Kavita Iyenger, Asian Development Bank, Manila, 2013) and "SAFTA and Food Security in South Asia-An Overview" in Regional Trade Agreements and Food Security in Asia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2012.



# ***India's Trade with South Asian Neighbours: Perceptions and Reality-with Special Reference to India-Pakistan Trade***

*Indra Nath Mukherji*

All South Asian countries are, in some way or the other, sensitive to economic interaction with India. While India's dominant role in the region is frequently highlighted, an expectation that India needs to further open up its market to the products of other South Asian countries is also underlined. The major issues for concern among India's neighbours are: an adverse and further deteriorating trade balance; a variety of tariff and non-tariff restrictions imposed by India, such as sanitary and phytosanitary barriers and technical barriers on their exportable trade; subsidies on India's exportable items, adversely affecting other's production of primary products; and inadequate infrastructure and testing facilities on Indian side of the border, affecting their primary products exports, etc. On the other hand, India has, in recent years, undertaken a number of measures to reduce trade restrictions in favour of neighbouring countries, particularly the least developed ones. These include: drastically reducing items under India's Sensitive List under SAFTA, particularly favouring the Least Developed Countries (LDCs); offering duty-free, quota-free imports to all LDCs, and strengthening Land Customs Stations along India's borders, etc. The objectives of the study are: to factor in the responses of all relevant stakeholders (traders, business associations and scholars); to map the perceptions with the ground reality; to ascertain the impact, if any, of overtures made by India; and to chart out a suitable path for India with respect to trade policies in respect of its neighbours.



## GABRIEL IAN LYNN OCKERSZ

Director  
Bandaranaike Centre for International  
Studies (BCIS)  
Colombo, Sri Lanka  
Email: [director@bcis.edu.lk](mailto:director@bcis.edu.lk)



Mr. Gabriel Ian Lynn Ockersz, Director of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS), Sri Lanka, was previously an Associate Editor with *The Island*, a Colombo based newspaper. Before joining *The Island*, Mr. Ockersz worked with *The Sun* and *The Daily News*. Mr. Ockersz has been a regular contributor to the national press since 1982 on subject areas ranging from domestic and international politics to personality profiles, arts and culture, including weekly columns in the *The Daily News* titled "Asia Watch" and "Global scrutiny" and in *The Island* under the title "World Scan". Currently, he is also working as Visiting Lecturer at the University of Colombo. Previously he has served as Lecturer in Aquinas College, Sri Lanka; Diplomatic Training Institute, Colombo, Kelaniya University and Open University of Sri Lanka. He has two publications to his credit: "Flame and Sparks", a collection of poems of socio-religious significance (October 2002), and "The Peace Thou Gives", a collection of devotional poems (July 2010). He was conferred the title "Catholic Writer 2004" by the Catholic Writers' Association of Sri Lanka. He was appointed as a member of Advisory Body by Ministry of Constitutional Affairs in the 1990s to help find political solution to the ethnic conflict.



## ***Stepped-up Inter-State Dialogue as a Key to Improving SAARC Development Prospects***

*Gabriel Ian Lynn Ockersz*

How India and the majority of her neighbours have perceived each other over the decades have, to a great degree, determined the quality and tone of their relations. For example, in the case of Sri Lanka, some local nationalist sections in particular have been prone to see India as a formidable and overbearing regional power who should be related to with a great deal of circumspection and even suspicion. Needless to say, such perceptions have got in the way of Sri Lanka consistently improving her ties with India at a number of levels. These strains have, to some extent, stymied the two countries' efforts to step-up people-to-people contact. Over the decades, Indo-Lanka relations have witnessed a number of highs and lows and it should be plain to see that a major casualty of such strained relations is the all-important SAARC project. While each country needs to act on the basis of its perceived national interest, it needs to be done with a full awareness of other countries' concerns and sensitivities, particularly in the security sphere. Interactions among the SAARC Eight have thus far lacked continuous dialogue at the state level and at the people-to-people level. The SAARC countries must enter into an earnest and sustained dialogue to lay a practicable blueprint for a future of stability and peace. We need to see how SAARC could be further equipped and empowered to bring about this positive order of things. Perhaps, the SAARC constitution should be changed to make the region's prospects brighter.







***Session IV***

***India & South Asia: Perceptions and  
Expectations***

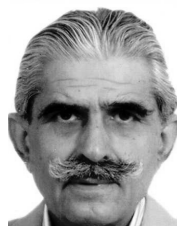
***Thursday, October 31, 2013***

***01.30 - 04:00 pm***



## **ASHOK K. MEHTA**

Security Analyst/Retired Major General of  
the Indian Army  
New Delhi, India  
Email: mehtaashokk@yahoo.co.in



Commissioned in 1957, Gen. (Retd.) Ashok K. Mehta joined the Fifth Gorkhas and attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, US, and the Royal College of Defence Studies, UK. He is a founder-member of Defence Planning Staff and his last assignment was as General Officer Commanding, IPKF (South), Sri Lanka. Gen. Mehta has fought in every war and counterinsurgency operation that India has engaged in between 1957 and 1991, except the 1962 war when he was on a peacekeeping mission in Congo. Gen. Mehta is involved in a number of dialogues and peace processes between India and other South Asian countries. He is the convenor of a new regional dialogue exploring a regional approach to a post-2014 Afghanistan. His latest work is an ongoing effort on building consensus within South Asian nations on regional cooperation in peacekeeping. He was Defence Editor, Sunday Magazine, and a regular columnist for publications including The Wall Street Journal, Financial Times and Far Eastern Economic Review. He has written two books: "War Despatches – Operation Iraqi Freedom" (Haranand Publications, 2004); and "The Royal Nepal Army: Meeting the Maoist Challenge" (Rupa and Co., 2005). He is working on two others: "Operation Parakram: the War That Never Was" and "IPKF in Sri Lanka 25 Years On".



## SHAHMAHMOOD MIAKHEL

Country Director, United States  
Institute of Peace (USIP)  
Kabul, Afghanistan  
Email: smiakhel@gmail.com



Mr. Shahmahmood Miakhel is the Afghanistan Country Director of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Kabul. Prior to joining the USIP in 2009, Mr. Miakhel worked as a Governance Adviser/Deputy Head of Governance Unit for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. From 2003-05, Mr. Miakhel served as the Deputy Minister of Interior of Afghanistan. Miakhel also worked as a reporter for Pashto and Dari Services of Voice of America (1985-1990) and as the Deputy Director of SOS/Belgium, an international organisation assisting Afghan refugees in Pakistan. He also worked for UNDP/UNOPS program in Afghanistan as Senior Liaison Officer to establish District Rehabilitation Shuras (DRS) in Eastern and South-Eastern provinces of Afghanistan. He was elected to the *Emergency Loya Jirga* in 2002, the *Peace Jirga* between Afghanistan and Pakistan in August 2007 and *Consultative Peace Jirga* in June 2010.

He has published books in Pashto and English: "Emergency Loya Jirga and the Election Process in the Eastern Provinces of Afghanistan"; "In the Light of Truth," a personal account of the mujahideen uprising in the Kunar Province and refugee life in Pakistan; "Ministry of Interior: Challenges and Achievements" Personal Account (2003-05); and "Understanding Afghanistan: Collection of Articles" (2001-12).



## ***Seizing New Opportunity for Regional Cooperation and Understanding***

*Shahmahmood Miakhel*

Myths and (mis) perceptions are an invisible and inseparable part of eastern culture, especially within South Asia. Unfortunately, South Asian politicians cover their personal failures to promote good governance, effective security and economic growth by exploiting historic myths and misperceptions within the region in order to divert the attention of people from real problems. While this may be an effective populist tool for re-election or consolidating power, it has historically led to fractured regional politics. These myths and (mis) perceptions have had a negative impact on security, economic growth, governance and regional cooperation among regional states. Changing these deleterious perceptions will depend on sincere efforts by political leaders and elites of all these countries to work hard to remove unsubstantiated allegations against each other. South Asia's political leaders must move away from the rhetoric of the Cold War or Great Game in the region and look for ways to develop a new political culture that embraces modern challenges and opportunities. In this piece, a few examples of these (mis) perceptions about Afghanistan's relationship with India and Pakistan since 2001 will be shared. The key to improving the relationship between regional states is improving governance in each of these countries and an increased role for a new generation of politicians who will have the energy and vision to construct a new vision of the world and the region.



## PEMA TENZIN

Regional Head, Kuensel Corporation  
Kanglung, Trashigang, Bhutan  
Email: pemakuensel@gmail.com



Mr. Pema Tenzin is currently the Regional Head of Kuensel Corporation at Kanglung, Trashigang, Bhutan, taking care of Kuensel's business and marketing in the six eastern districts of Bhutan. Mr. Pema has a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Bangalore University of India, where he has also worked as a student leader. Mr. Pema has attended several international and regional training programmes and seminars in Norway, Bhutan and India on business, leadership, natural resources and cooperation.



## ***Bhutan and Its International Collaborations 2013***

*Pema Tenzin*

Bhutan came out of its self-imposed isolation only in the late 1960s when the outside world had already undergone centuries of modern development and interaction. The country has witnessed rapid socio-economic development over the last four decades. The Gross National Happiness philosophy, conceptualised sometime in the 1970s, is a very earnest system that the government is committed to and working on. An absolute monarchy since 1907, the 2013 saw the second democratically elected government take charge after the fourth King started the process in 2006. India has been and is still the largest economic partner and supporter of the country. Bhutan has also started opening up to the outside world, with tourism becoming a huge contributor to national income after the sale of hydropower electricity to India, which is about 45 percent of national revenue. The last decade also saw Bhutan taking more interest in foreign direct investments and international collaborations. Bhutan currently has diplomatic relations with some 50 countries, a far cry from the mere 20s just a few years ago. Even with less than 700,000 people in the country and with some 50,000 foreign workers, the government is considering the export of labour to foreign countries, joining the WTO, opening a big education city, further expansion of FDI and medical tourism, to diversify and amplify the economy. Bhutan has also been very keen on South Asian cooperation and further strengthening of regional collaborations.



## **DENZIL ABEL**

Member, Myanmar Institute of Strategic  
and International Studies  
Yangon, Myanmar  
Email: denzilabel@gmail.com



U. Denzil Abel holds an M.A. in International Public Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. He has served in various positions in the Myanmar Foreign Service (1972 -2005), as SO and ASEAN Plus Three Specialist, ASEAN Secretariat (2006-2008), as Strategic Support Manager, ASEAN High Level Task Force for Cyclone Nargis Operation (2009-2010) and as Senior Advisor to UN-Habitat Myanmar, United Nations (2011).





## ***Myanmar's Perceptions of India***

*Denzil Abel*

Myanmar has had a long historical relationship with India since antiquity, taking roots in Buddhism, the concepts of kingship and cultural exchanges. However, Myanmar people across the social, political and economic spectrum have a negative view of India arising out of their shared colonial relationship, when Myanmar was made a province of British India. Many Indians came to work and stayed on in Myanmar. These Indians are generally looked down upon and are objects of discrimination as a result of the colonial legacy. Myanmar looks up to India as a balance to China's stakes in Myanmar. Bilateral trade with India is far less than that with China. Defence ties are underdeveloped and not prized much by Myanmar armed forces. India's rationale for developing relations with Myanmar is seen by some Myanmar observers as attempts to use these relations as a tool to achieve other policy objectives, rather than as an end in itself. Despite these perceptions, the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has assisted in raising India's positive profile in Myanmar, thereby enabling synergy in developing areas vital to Myanmar's transition to democracy.



## **MOHAMED NAAHEE NASEEM**

Journalist, Minivan News  
Male, Maldives  
Email: mohamed.naahee@gmail.com



Mr. Mohamed Naahee Naseem is a journalist at Minivan News, the leading English news website in Maldives. He has played a central role in reporting the ongoing political crisis in the Maldives that began following the controversial transfer of power in February 2012. At Minivan News, Mr. Naahee Naseem mainly focuses on the politics and current affairs beat, while also is often engaged in court room news. Apart from Minivan News, he has also appeared at private local broadcaster Raajje Television, as a news analyst in its current affairs program, 'Sungadi' (translated: Zero Hour). He is also currently involved in formulating the Press Club of Maldives (PCM), an NGO that focuses on supporting and promoting journalism in the Maldives, while also creating a platform that would support local journalists in their career development. Prior to joining Minivan News, he spent a brief period of time working at *Miadhu Daily*, a local newspaper, where he followed the same beat. He is currently a part-time student, pursuing a bachelors degree in Sharia' and Law (LLB Hon.) at the Faculty of Sharia and Law, the Maldives National University.



## ***Maldives' General Perceptions of India and the Role of Media***

*Mohamed Naahee Naseem*

India and the Maldives have shared a longstanding bilateral relationship since establishing diplomatic ties following the independence of the Republic of Maldives. Throughout this longstanding friendly relationship, India has emerged as a strong economic, strategic and military partner while playing a crucial role in the country's democratisation process. Although the Maldives sees India as a formidable partner, recent political developments have led to a change in general impressions towards its neighbour. Following the controversial change of government in February 2012, India-Maldives diplomatic ties have often come up as a major topic of debate in local politics. The local media has played an influential role in shaping public consensus towards its neighbour. The paper highlights general Maldivian perceptions and impressions towards India, both prior to and after the beginning of the ongoing political crisis in the country, while critically analysing major developments that have led to the changes in impressions towards India. The paper also highlights the role of media in shaping these impressions.



## PHAE THANN Oo

Former Ambassador  
Myanmar  
Email: mmm184@gmail.com



Phae Thann Oo is a retired Ambassador of the Myanmar Foreign Service. Before being appointed as Ambassador, he was the Director General of the Department of Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has been a career diplomat and has served in various capacities. As a diplomat he served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Myanmar and at the Myanmar Embassies in Paris, Singapore, Ottawa, Seoul and Dhaka. As Myanmar Delegate, he attended a number of annual UNGA meetings in New York and some UN Special Summit Meetings, such as United Nations Conference on Economic Development (Earth Summit) in Rio, Brazil in 1992, UNFCCC Summit Meeting in Kyoto, Japan in 1999. As Secretary of the National Commission for Environmental Affairs, he had participated in some environmental conferences on Climate Change, Desertification and Sustainable Development. He also served as Myanmar SOM leader at ASEAN meetings and summits.



## ***Conference Team***



## Conference Coordinator

### VISHAL CHANDRA

Associate Fellow  
Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses  
New Delhi, India  
Email: [idsa.sac2013@gmail.com](mailto:idsa.sac2013@gmail.com)

Mr. Vishal Chandra is Associate Fellow specialising on Afghan affairs at the Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi. He joined IDSA in 2003 and his core area of research is politics of Afghan conflict. He has travelled widely in Afghanistan as part of his research at IDSA. He regularly lectures on Afghan affairs at various institutions in India.

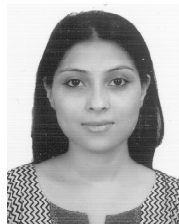
He has recently edited the book, "India's Neighbourhood: The Armies of South Asia", Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2013. He was also co-editor of the book, "India's Neighbourhood: Challenges Ahead", Rubicon Publishers, Delhi, 2008.

Among his select publications are: "Afghanistan: Likely Scenarios and India's Options" in *India's Neighbourhood: Challenges in the Next Two Decades*, Pentagon Security International, New Delhi, 2012; "Afghanistan's National Army: Expectations and Scepticism" in *India's Neighbourhood: The Armies of South Asia*, Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2013; "Afghanistan Beyond 2014: The China Factor" in *Asian Strategic Review*, Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2013 (co-authored); "The Evolving Politics of Taliban Reintegration & Reconciliation in Afghanistan", *Strategic Analysis*, Routledge, September 2011; "The National Front in Afghan Politics: An Exploratory Study", *Strategic Analysis*, July 2009; "The Taliban Resurrection & the Changing Course of Afghan Civil War" in *Afghanistan: The Challenge*, Pentagon Press, 2007; and "Warlords, Drugs and the 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan: The Paradoxes", *Strategic Analysis*, January 2006.



## **GULBIN SULTANA**

Research Assistant  
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi, India  
Email: gulbin.sultana@gmail.com



Ms. Gulbin Sultana is a Research Assistant with the South Asia Centre in IDSA. She completed her B.A (Hons) and Masters in Political Science from Indraprastha College, Delhi University. She has done her M.Phil on “India’s Naval Support to Sri Lanka and the Maldives” from South Asian Studies Division of School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Currently, she is working on her doctoral thesis on “Sri Lanka’s Maritime Security”. She has also done PG Diploma in Human Rights. Before joining IDSA, she worked with the National Maritime Foundation and the United Service Institution of India. She closely observes politico-economic developments in Sri Lanka and has travelled widely in Sri Lanka as part of her research at IDSA. Her latest paper (co-authored), “Mahinda Rajapaksa’s India Policy: Engage & Countervail” was published in *Strategic Analysis*, Routledge, 37(1), January 2013.





## ADITYA VALIATHAN PILLAI

Research Intern  
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi, India  
Email: valiathan.pillai03@gmail.com



Mr. Aditya Pillai is pursuing Master's degree in International Security at the Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po, and is currently doing an internship at IDSA. He holds a B.A. (Journalism and Communications) from the Manipal Institute of Communication, Manipal University, where he graduated with the Gold Medal for Best Outgoing Student (2009-2012) and the Best Outgoing Student Award instituted by The Hindu for practical experience in journalism (2009-2012). He was also previously Editor-in-Chief of *The Manipal Journal*, a news website, where he led a team of 31 reporters, photographers and sub-editors for one-year tenure. He is interested in South Asian security dynamics in the fields of defence expenditure, sectarianism, water related conflict and, more specifically, Pakistan. He currently works with the Pakistan Project team at IDSA. His latest paper (co-authored) was titled, "Cutting long-term defense expenditure: An Indian case study" (French National Defence Review, *Revue Défense Nationale*, March 2013). He previously did a stint, on scholarship, at the Hochschule University of Applied Sciences, Bremen, Germany, where he focused on Communication Studies and Political Science.



## *Help Line*

	<b>Office</b>	<b>Mobile</b>
<b>Mr. Vishal Chandra</b> Conference Coordinator	91-11-26717983 Extn. 7208	9868431788
<b>Ms. Gulbin Sultana</b> Researcher	91-11-26717983 Extn. 7336	9971094557
<b>Mr. Aditya Pillai</b> Research Intern	91-11-26717983 Extn. 7323	9818734033
<b>Ms. Ameeta Narang</b> Conference Cell	91-11-26717983 Extn. 7202	9871844607
<b>Aparna Krishna</b> Manager, Communications & Outreach	91-11-26717983 Ext. 7204	9899802660

