



16th South Asia Conference
on
**SAGAR to MAHASAGAR: Strategic and Developmental
Partnerships**

PROGRAMME

Day One: Tuesday, 24 February 2026

0900-0930: Registration

0930-1030: Inaugural Session

Special Address by Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy,
Director General, MP-IDSA

Release of MP-IDSA Books

Vote of Thanks by Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik, Research
Fellow, MP-IDSA

1030-1045: Tea

1045-1245: Session I: Economic Integration: Connectivity and Trade

Chair: Amb. Leela K. Ponappa, Former Deputy National
Security Advisor

Speakers: Mr. Jayant Singh, Chairman, Land Ports Authority of
India (LPAI) - *"Land Ports as Anchors of Regional
Integration in India's Extended Neighbourhood"*

Mr. Yubak Dangol, Director, Nepal Intermodal
Transport Development Board - *"Nepal and Regional
Connectivity in South Asia"*

Dr. Prabir De, Professor, Research and Information
System for Developing Countries (RIS) - *"Strengthening
Regional Trade and Integration in South Asia: Role of
Maritime Corridors"*

Ms. Mandakini Kaul, Regional Coordinator for South Asia, World Bank - *"Ports, Borders, and Investment: Integrating Finance, Advisory, and Private Participation"*

Mr. Maiwand Safi, Researcher, South Asian University - *"The Strategic Significance of Afghanistan in India's MAHASAGAR Vision"*

1245-1345: Lunch

1345-1545: Session II: MAHASAGAR for Development Cooperation in the Global South

Chair: **Amb. Rajiv Bhatia**, Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Studies Programme, Gateway House

Speakers: **Rear Admiral Y. N. Jayarathna**, Former Chief Hydrographer, International Consultant - *"SAGAR to MAHASAGAR: A Concept in Need of Perpetual Changes"*

Dr. Aly Shameem, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Social Sciences of the Faculty of Arts, Maldives National University - *"Prospects for the Maldives for Improved Security and Trade Relations through the Vision of MAHASAGAR"*

Dr. Malshini Senaratne, Lecturer, University of Seychelles and Director, Eco-Sol Consulting - *"Small States with Big Oceans: Seychelles' Blue Economy Model as a Development Framework for enhancing MAHASAGAR Cooperation"*

Dr. Hiacinter Burchard Rwechungura, Lecturer, Dept. of Transport and Nautical Sciences, Dares Salaam Maritime Institute - *"Consolidating Maritime Partnerships: India and Tanzania as Development Partners in the Global South"*

Dr. Abhishek Mishra, Associate Fellow, MP-IDSA - *"Resilience, Energy and Maritime Security in Mozambique: Assessing India's Role in Supporting Mozambique's Development"*

1545-1600: Tea

1600-1800: Session III: Reconnecting History: Cultural Diplomacy in South Asia

Chair: **Amb. Veena Sikri**, Former High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh

Speakers: **Amb. K. Nandini Singla**, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations - *"Cultural Diplomacy in India's Foreign Policy"*

Dr. Sandagomi Coperahewa, Professor & Head, Dept. of Sinhala, University of Colombo - *"Beyond Political Boundaries: Tagore's Vision of India-Sri Lanka Cultural Dialogue"*

Dr. Niloy Ranjan Biswas, Professor, Dept. of International Relations, Dhaka University
- *"Reconnecting History: Cultural Diplomacy, MAHASAGAR, and the Global South Reimagined from South Asia"*

Dr. Gaurav Bhattarai, Assistant Professor, Dept. of International Relations, Tribhuvan University
- *"From Himalaya to MAHASAGAR: Making Sense of Nepal's Cultural Ties with India through Transit Access, and Open Borders"*

Dr. Ashok Behuria, Senior Fellow, MP-IDSA
- *"Dharma Diplomacy: Reclaiming the Mandala in India's Foreign Policy"*

Day Two: Wednesday, 25 February 2026

0900-0930: Registration and Tea

0930-1130: **Session IV: Addressing Non-Traditional Security Challenges**

Chair: **Prof. Sanjay Chaturvedi**, Vice President & Dean, Faculty of International Studies (FIS), South Asian University

Speakers: **Mr. Dammu Ravi**, Former Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs
- *"Non-Traditional Security Issues"* (Online)

Dr. Chido Mutangadura-Yeswa, Policy Research & Advocacy Lead, Africa Innovation and Research Centre, Nelson Mandela University - *"Towards a South-South Cooperation Framework on Climate Sensitive Security Governance"*

Mr. Ugyen Dorji, Assistant Professor, Royal University of Bhutan - *"Urban Freshwater Security in the Eastern Himalayas: Biodiversity Decline, Microplastic Pollution, and Bhutan's Pathways for Resilient River Governance"*

Mr. Kyaw Saw Han, Independent Researcher
- *"Common Non-Traditional Security Threats between India and Myanmar: Prospects and Challenges"*

Dr. Uttam K. Sinha, Senior Fellow, MP-IDSA
- *"Interdependent Resources, Interdependent Risks: The Food-Energy-Water Nexus"*

1130-1330: **Session V: Navigating Geopolitical Dynamics in the Extended Region**

Chair: **Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy**, Director General, MP-IDSA

Speakers: **Dr. Jabin T. Jacob**, Associate Professor, Shiv Nadar University - *"SAGAR to MAHASAGAR: China in the Way"* (Online)

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan, Executive Director, Bangladesh Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs, Dept. of International Relations, Jahangirnagar University - *"Beyond Hedging and Balancing: Bangladesh's Geo-economic Statecraft in an Era of Transactional Multipolarity"*

Dr. Juvence F. Ramasy, Senior Lecturer, University of Toamasina - *"Madagascar facing Geopolitical Dynamics in the Great Indian Ocean"*

Mr. Muhammad Waffa Kharisma, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Indonesia - *"Diversification without Depth: ASEAN-India Cooperation in a Fragmented Indo-Pacific"*

Mr. Amara Thiha, Non-Resident Fellow, China Program, Stimson Center - *"Myanmar's Coastal Frontier and Indian Ocean Security"*

1330-1430: Lunch

1430-1630: Session VI: Strengthening Regional Institutions

Chair: **Amb. Riva Ganguly Das**, Former Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs

Speakers: **Vice Admiral S.N. Ghormade**, Former Vice Chief, Indian Navy & Secretary General, Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) - *"Strengthening Regional Institutions: Colombo Security Conclave"*

Prof. Sanjay Chaturvedi, Vice President & Dean, Faculty of International Studies (FIS), South Asian University - *"Indian Ocean Regionalism at a Crossroads: IORA, Interregnum, and the Anthropocene"*

Dr. Athaulla Ahmed Rasheed, Head of Centre for Security and Strategic Studies, Maldives National University - *"Role of Small States in Shaping Indian Ocean Regional Institutions: Framing Maldives' Security Narratives"*

Ms. Bineswaree Bolaky, Economic Affairs Officer, UN Economic Commission for Africa - *"Linking MAHASAGAR to Africa: India's role in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement"*

Dr. Loitongbam Bishwanjit Singh, Assistant Professor, Dept. of South East Asian Studies, Manipur University - *"Relooking BIMSTEC: Optimising Advantages and Dealing with the Disadvantages"*

1630-1645: Valedictory Session

Chair: **Group Captain (Dr.) Ajey Lele**, Deputy Director General, MP-IDS

Vote of Thanks: **Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik**, Research Fellow & Conference Coordinator, MP-IDS