



RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

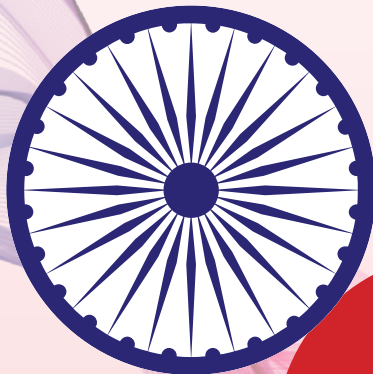
in collaboration with



International Conference on Bay of Bengal and India-Japan Economic Relations

11-12 March 2024
WM Hall, BCC&I, Kolkata

Outcome Document



International Conference on
**Bay of Bengal and India-Japan
Economic Relations**

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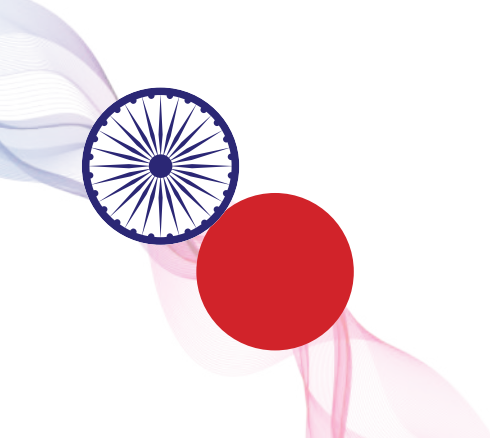


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Zone IV B, 4th Floor, India Habitat Centre
Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110 003, India
Tel.: +91-11-24682177-80; Fax: +91-11-24682173-74
E-mail: aic@ris.org.in; dgoffice@ris.org.in
Website: www.ris.org.in; <http://aic.ris.org.in>



CONTENTS

<i>Preface from Director General, RIS</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
Summary	1
Agenda.....	7
Concept Note	11
Resumes.....	15
Glimpses of the Conference.....	39



PREFACE

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi

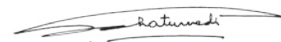
Director General, RIS

India-Japan economic relationship has grown manifold over the years offering vast potential for harnessing complementarities and promoting deeper cooperation. Besides trade and investment, infrastructure and connectivity, maritime economy, digital economy, etc. are the major components of India-Japan partnership. As two large and responsible economies in Asia, there is a strong convergence in the approaches of both the countries towards development cooperation especially triangular cooperation in third countries. Inclusive and sustainable development through cross-border connectivity linkages and integration of regional value chains have characterised the bilateral and third country projects of India and Japan in the recent years. Bilateral relations between India and Japan and Japan and Bangladesh provide solid foundation for trilateral partnership between India, Japan and Bangladesh. The synergy between 'India's Act Policy' and 'India-Japan Act East Forum' could pave the way for such trilateral partnerships in the South and Southeast Asian regions. Apart from bilateral engagements, India-Japan partnership can play vital role at regional and multilateral level initiatives like Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), WTO, UN, etc. In a spatial framework, the improved connectivity between the three countries could contribute to the development process of India's Northeastern region and enhance connectivity with Southeast Asia.

Building on the expanding bilateral relations and ample scope for trilateral cooperation, India and Japan could become harbingers of a new narrative of development which propagates inclusivity and sustainability. It entails going beyond GDP as the metric of growth and development and focusing on well-being as the basis for measurement of economic progress. It also needs to be underlined that uplifting societies and economies of the Global South through a shared vision and agenda for change is the need of the hour. Global South is, therefore, aspiring to build a prosperous and inclusive future that takes into account their fundamental development needs and aspiration for accelerated socio-economic growth. The New Delhi G-20 leadership declaration has promised to take forward these issues with utmost commitment. India and Japan could lead this process of transition and help promote wider replication of such best practices.

In view of this broader background and to deliberate various aspects India-Japan partnership in the context of changing global order and regional development, RIS organized a two-day international conference on the theme of “Bay of Bengal and India-Japan Economic Relations” in Kolkata on 11-12 March 2024. The programme was held in collaboration with the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), National Digital Library of India (NDLI), Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and Kolkata Society for Asian Studies (KSAS) with participation of diplomats, scholars, practitioners and industry experts from Bangladesh, India and Japan.

This publication presents the major issues discussed and the key takeaways from the aforesaid Conference. I am sure it would be found interesting and useful for scholars, practitioners and development agencies. I take this opportunity to thank the colleagues at the BCCI, MAKAIAS, NDLI, KSAS and RIS for the tremendous success of the Conference. Thanks are also due to all the distinguished delegates and participants who joined us at this Conference and enriched the discussion with their valuable insights.



Sachin Chaturvedi



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The outcome document of the conference on Bay of Bengal and India-Japan Economic Relations has been prepared by Mr Arpit Barman, Research Assistant, RIS under the overall guidance of Dr Priyadarshi Dash, Associate Professor, RIS and Dr Prabir De, Professor, RIS. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance extended by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), National Digital Library of India (NDLI), Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and Kolkata Society for Asian Studies (KSAS). We are also thankful to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India for the support in organising the roundtable.

We are grateful to Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS for his cooperation and guidance. We are also highly thankful to Amb. Sujan Chinoy, DG, MP-IDSA for sharing his valuable observations on the programme. We would like to acknowledge, in particular, the support rendered by the Consulate-General of Japan in Kolkata.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants of the conference – invited speakers, presenters, chairpersons, sponsors, and audience alike.

Views expressed in the outcome document are those of the participants of the conference and not the views of the Governments of India, Bangladesh or Japan, and the RIS. Usual disclaimers apply.



CONFERENCE SUMMARY

- RIS organized a two-day International Conference in Kolkata on 11-12 March 2024 on the theme “Bay of Bengal and India-Japan Economic Relations” in collaboration with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), National Digital Library of India (NDLI), Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and Kolkata Society for Asian Studies (KSAS). Over 50 speakers comprising of diplomats, scholars, practitioners and industry experts from India, Japan and Bangladesh shared diverse perspectives on various aspects of India-Japan relations and the emerging trilateral partnership between India, Japan and Bangladesh for the development of India’s Northeast. The sessions delved into issues of trade, investment and value chains, collaboration for utilising the opportunities in new sectors and overcoming challenges to further enhance the relationship.
- The Conference comprised of two Special Panel sessions on Japan-India Partnership in the Changing Global Order and Accelerated Partnerships for Regional Development. Apart from two special panels, the Conference had five sessions which deliberated upon specific areas of cooperation such as Industrial Policy and Science, Technology and Innovation; Trade, Investment and Value Chains; People-to-People Contacts and Cultural Collaboration. The sessions also discussed the prospects of trilateral relationship between India, Japan and Bangladesh for development of India’s Northeast and scope for greater cooperation between Japan and India in the Bay of Bengal region.
- The **inaugural session of the Conference** was chaired by Ambassador Sujan Chinoy, Director General, MP-IDSA, New Delhi who shared historical perspectives on India-Japan relations, particularly the civilisational linkages between Japan and the state of West Bengal. Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, New Delhi in his welcome remarks presented the objectives of the Conference and provided key areas of existing cooperation between India and Japan, and the common areas of cooperation between India-Japan and India-Bangladesh relations. Further, Special Remarks were extended by Mr Koichi Nakagawa, Consul-General, Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata and Mr Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary, East Asia Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Mr Nakagawa highlighted the geostrategic importance of Kolkata and Japan’s ambitious plans to forge industrial value chains linking the Eastern and Northeastern regions of India, and Bangladesh, thereby deepening economic integration. Mr Das highlighted the potential for Japanese investment in India especially infrastructure development, extending the focus to establish industrial townships and strengthening economic ties, including

collaboration with Bangladesh, defence, technology, and resilient supply chains, crucial for both nations' economic resurgence. Dr Prabir De, Professor, RIS extended the Vote of Thanks and discussed the motivation for organizing the Conference.

- Various eminent speakers put forward their key ideas and policies for strengthening the relations between India and Japan. Ambassador Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan, highlighted key areas for strengthening Indo-Japan relations such as semiconductor manufacturing framework, human resource management, green economy, maritime trade and transport and development of eco-friendly technologies. Ambassador Krishna Srinivasan, Former Foreign Secretary of India also highlighted potential cooperation in the areas of Tourism, Trade, Infrastructure and Cultural. In his special remarks, Mr Nikhilesh Giri, Consul General of India in Osaka stressed on the need to look beyond the main cities like Tokyo and New Delhi for deeper ties between the two nations with more investments in the people-to-people relations. Dr Ashok Chawla, Advisor, MEA delivered the Valedictory Address emphasising on the need for special attention on greater People-to-People and Business-to-Business relations between the two countries. Dr Chawla said that the trilateral cooperation has huge potential for improvement, and the India-Japan Act East Forum could play a lead role in facilitating comprehensive engagement between India and Japan.
-
- The **Special Panel on Japan-India Partnership in the Changing Global Order** highlighted that India and Japan share a strong historical bond and have achieved significant milestones together. Their partnership holds immense potential in contributing to the evolving global order, particularly in critical and emerging technologies. In fact, reference was made to the statement by Dr Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India on Japan as a “Natural Partner” of India. Multiple meetings between India and Japan in 2022-2023 have reinforced their cooperation, focusing on peace, stability, joint military exercises, maritime security, and cybercrime. Priorities include infrastructural projects like the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor, Information and Communication Technology, clean energy, Cultural Exchange, and Tourism. India and Japan have faced past conflicts such as failure of 1974 nuclear test and diverging perceptions of strategic threats which have been overcome through initiatives like the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and joint military exercises. The partnership is crucial in the face of common challenges, such as territorial disputes with China, and both nations are working towards enhancing their economic, security, and cultural ties to address the changing global dynamics.
- The session on **Scaling Up the Partnership; Industrial Policy, and Science Technology and Innovation** began with the discussion on the Japan-India Summit in 2022. The summit marked the announcement of a Partnership for a Peaceful, Stable, and Prosperous Post-Covid World, emphasised the strengthening of the Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership through tourism, People-to-People exchanges, and sports. Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to India, constituting 41 per cent of total external

assistance to India, positions Japan as the largest bilateral donor to India. Key sectors such as Transport, Power, Irrigation, Environment, and Investment requires focused attention. The session highlighted a comparative analysis of the R&D expenditure of both countries, the importance of the nine National Missions of PM-STIAC, and the potential for enhancing Student and Cultural Exchange Programs. Scholarships and employment opportunities in Japan, along with the India-Japan Semiconductor cooperation, are identified as significant areas for growth and collaboration. For semiconductor cooperation four key strategies were identified: (i) Launch of “Japan-India Semiconductor Supply Chain Policy Dialogue”, (ii) Inter-governmental Cooperation, (iii) Cooperation among enterprises and (iv) Establishment of a semiconductor coordinator. The session underscored the pivotal role of technology in industrialization, emphasizing how technological innovations like drones can bridge gaps between the public and private sectors, offering rich opportunities for joint ventures in various domains of technology.

- The session on **Strengthening Economic Relations: Trade, Investment and Value Chains** highlighted the robust bilateral partnership between India and Japan in trade and investment with potential for further collaboration in these areas. A significant milestone was the implementation of CEPA since August 1, 2011. Japan stands as India’s fifth-largest foreign investor as of 2023, with investments mainly focused on automobile, infrastructure, and telecom sectors. However, untapped potential in semiconductor technology and digital transformation present opportunities for further investment and growth. Both nations share similar trajectories as Asian powers. India’s remarkable economic growth, especially Post-Covid-19 pandemic, along with ongoing reforms and initiatives like “Make in India” and the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, signal a conducive environment for investment. The burgeoning electronics industry, coupled with initiatives like PLI, holds potential despite geopolitical risks. Looking forward, the Indo-Japan cooperation aims to strengthen bilateral trade, IT collaboration, and fintech initiatives. The agreement between the Fintech Association of Japan and GIFT City, coupled with the potential of blockchain technology and Central Bank Digital Currencies, opens new avenues for collaboration. Furthermore, insights from the NASSCOM Quarterly Industry Review and Mitsui & Co.’s extensive history and investments in India underscore the potential of the Bay of Bengal region. Opportunities in agro-based industries, petrochemicals, mineral resources, and sustainability initiatives highlight the region’s vast potential for economic development and collaboration.
- The session on **Building People-to-People Contacts and Cultural Collaboration: New Opportunities** discussed various historical, cultural ties between India and Japan, and potential for enhancing cultural and tourism connect between the two nations in the future. India- Japan historical ties can be dated back to the 6th century when Buddhist teachings from India influenced Japanese culture. Efforts to strengthen cultural ties include the establishment of institutions like the Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Tokyo, offering courses in Indian music, dance, yoga, and languages. Despite challenges such as the lack of Japanese teachers in India, both governments are committed to enhancing cultural

exchange through initiatives like introducing Japanese language courses and granting funds to Indian universities for Japanese studies. The importance of grassroots engagement and fostering deeper ties beyond major cities like Tokyo and New Delhi was emphasized, with efforts to increase the number of Japanese residents in India and promote learning of Japanese language. Tourism emerged as a promising avenue for cooperation, with both governments actively promoting it through various initiatives such as tourism packages and participation in International Travel Expos. Cultural ties between India and Japan are evident in various fields such as cuisine, pop culture, and language. The session underscored the significance of cultural exchange programs, language learning, and mutual appreciation of traditional and contemporary arts in fostering closer ties between the two nations. Thus, despite the geographical distance, these two nations are aiming to further built bridges of understanding and friendship through cultural exchange programs, language learning, and with mutual appreciation of each other's traditional and contemporary arts.

- The session on **India's Northeast and the Emerging Trilateral of India, Japan, and Bangladesh** highlighted the imperative to establish and sustain industrial value chains in the region, fostering socio-economic development and employment opportunities. Japanese investment, particularly in deep-sea links, could provide Bangladesh and its neighbours access to global markets, potentially transforming the Bay of Bengal region into a regional industrial hub. Key points included the establishment of ports through Indo-Japanese collaboration, such as Matarbari and Sabroom Port, along with land ports on the Nepal and Bhutan borders. Agreements on port usage between India and Bangladesh were noted, emphasising the importance of multi-layered cooperation projects, and bolstering manufacturing and agricultural value chains. Recommendations for Bangladesh focused on developing strategies for industrial value chain growth, improving trade and investment capacities. Challenges for Japanese investment in India's Northeast such as difficult geographical terrains and limited connectivity were discussed, along with Japan's efforts, through ODA funding, in various developmental projects in the region. The session emphasised the importance of detailed project implementation, intra-regional connectivity, and looking beyond borders for future collaboration. Japan's growing interest in investing in Bangladesh's infrastructure development was noted with significant increase in investments observed since 2008, particularly after 2011. The potential of ports like Matarbari and Sultanganj River Port, as well as land ports like Agartala, in strengthening economic relations between India and Bangladesh, was highlighted as a promising avenue for further collaboration.
- The **Special Panel Session on Accelerated Partnership for Regional Development** underscored the dynamic growth potential of the Bay of Bengal region, with a growth rate ranging from 6.3 per cent to 6.8 per cent. The region is increasingly recognised as a key integrating force between South and Southeast Asia, with a focus on fostering new regionalism through enhanced integration and financial investments. Despite facing post-pandemic recession, the region offers favourable conditions for higher trade and investment, particularly in agriculture. Areas of comparative advantage as identified by the speakers

include textiles for Bangladesh, agro-based industries and power for Nepal and Bhutan, and traditional medicine for Sri Lanka. The session also highlighted the potential collaboration between the Bay of Bengal region countries and Japan in infrastructure, connectivity, energy security, science and technology, disaster management, maritime security, and tourism. An FTA between BIMSTEC and Japan was suggested as mutually beneficial. Challenges in Indo-Japan relations, such as faster Government-to-Government cooperation compared to People-to-People and Business-to-Business connections, were addressed. The need to improve India's visibility in Japan and vice versa, as well as investment in people-to-people contacts, was emphasised. Key pillars of Indo-Japan relations, including digital partnership, industrial competitiveness, and finance dialogue, were highlighted. The importance of regional connectivity, particularly through the Bay of Bengal region, and participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs) were discussed. Data on India's maritime connectivity and observations on the regional integration process, including progress made in transport and facilitation, were presented. JICA-assisted road projects and energy initiatives in the Bay of Bengal region were identified as game-changers. The way forward for the session involved reducing conflicts across border areas, promoting shared trade, and building trade corridors to foster sustainable regional development.

- The session on **Japan and India in the Bay of Bengal** highlighted the economic opportunities and challenges faced by the countries in the Bay of Bengal region. The future of India, Bangladesh and Japan cooperation requires a focus on people-centric issues, peace, stability, environment, and traditional knowledge. New business models must accommodate diverse security priorities. Despite challenges such as varying national priorities and security perceptions, over 250 agreements between India and Bangladesh demonstrate strong relations. Cooperation should prevail over competition, fostering a spirit of collaboration among governments in the Bay of Bengal region. The session also highlighted that while the number of Japanese companies operating in India and Bangladesh at present is relatively low, the Bay of Bengal holds significance for Japan due to its abundant natural and human resources, as well as its potential for rail, road, digital connectivity, and smart city infrastructure. Eastern and Northeastern regions of India are the main focus areas of India-Japan collaboration for infrastructure development, with efforts to create infrastructure enabling digitalisation, sustainability, and utilisation of human resources. Despite the potential, the number of Japanese companies operating in the region is not impressive. The Matarbari port, once operational, is expected to be a game-changer reducing logistical costs and fostering regional transformation with support from India and Japan. However, challenges such as informal trade, tariff and non-tariff barriers, and lack of People-to-People contacts need to be addressed. Digitalising trade is also seen as crucial for economic progress in this region. While India needs to diversify its trade sector and comply with global infrastructure standards to attract more Japanese investment, Bangladesh should offer a favourable socio-economic environment for integration into the regional GVCs. The Bay of Bengal offers an enabling environment for business for both India and Japan, with opportunities for capacity building and sustainable development. Efforts are being made

to restore lost connectivity linkages in the region, including initiatives like the Trilateral Highway which proposes to connect with ASEAN region. Northeast India, rich in natural and human resources, presents opportunities for sustainable and clean energy, internet connectivity, and smart city infrastructure, supported by government initiatives like the Northeastern Industrial Development Scheme.

- The closing session on **Fostering India-Japan Economic Relations** outlined key aspects and the way forward for strengthening bilateral ties. It emphasised the importance of peace and stability for regional economic prosperity and highlighted India and Bangladesh's strong relationship with Japan, marked by numerous agreements and MoUs. The strategic partnership between India and Japan plays a crucial role in shaping the Indo-Pacific region's future, focusing on shared values of democracy, rule of law, and upholding international norms. Defence cooperation, intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, and technology transfer are key aspects of their strategic ties. Efforts to rethink India-Japan collaboration with Malaysia were discussed, alongside the need for cross-border movement of capital, information, knowledge/technology and people to foster economic growth. Multilateral cooperation, spanning government-to-government, government-to-business, and business-public intellectual realms, were deemed crucial, particularly in addressing shared concerns like climate change and human security. The session proposed a forward-looking path through enhanced cooperation between governments, businesses, and public intellectuals, with a focus on India-Malaysia collaboration through conferences, seminars, and workshops. The session also discussed the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between India and Japan, evolving into a robust strategic partnership based on shared values and interests. Recent bilateral trade figures highlighted the growing economic engagement with Japan actively participating in the development of Northeast India through establishment of collaborative platforms such as Act East Forum. Japan's commitment to several key projects in India, including infrastructure development, metro connectivity, and climate change responses, demonstrates its dedication to fostering economic growth and collaboration in the region.
- The Conference was attended by over 100 people in both the days, and it was part of the various activities planned to commemorate the 40 years of RIS. Dr Priyadarshi Dash, Associate Professor, RIS has coordinated the conference.
- Participants thanked the RIS for hosting the international conference and gratefully acknowledged the support extended by MAKAIAS, BCC&I and KSAS in organizing the much needed discussion on India-Japan relations.



AGENDA

Day I: 11 March 2024

8.30- 09.30 Registration

09.30 - 10.15 Inaugural Session

Welcome Remarks: **Professor Sachin Chaturvedi**, Director General, RIS, New Delhi

Chair: **Ambassador Sujan Chinoy**, Director General, IDSA, New Delhi and Former Indian Ambassador to Japan

Special Remarks:

- **Mr Koichi Nakagawa**, Consul-General, Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata
- **Mr Gaurangalal Das**, Joint Secretary, East Asia Division, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), New Delhi (*Online*)

Vote of Thanks: **Dr Prabir De**, Professor, RIS, New Delhi

10.15 - 10.45 Group Photo & Tea/Coffee

10.45 - 11.45 Special Panel on Japan-India Partnership in the Changing Global Order

Chair: **Professor Sachin Chaturvedi**, Director General, RIS, New Delhi

Special Address: **Ambassador Sibi George**, Ambassador of India to Japan, Tokyo (*Online*)

Remarks:

- **Ambassador Krishnan Srinivasan**, Former Foreign Secretary of India
- **Professor Takenori Horimoto**, Visiting Professor, Gifu Women's University, Tokyo (*Online*)
- **Mr Ambarish Dasgupta**, Chairman, Intueri, and Formerly President, BCC&I and Head, KPMG India

Q&A

11.45 – 13.00 Session I: Scaling Up the Partnership: Industrial Policy, and Science, Technology and Innovation

Chair: Professor Milan Kumar Sanyal, Emeritus Professor, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Co-chair, India-Japan Science Council, Kolkata

Panellists:

- **Mr Ryuhei Nishi**, First Secretary (Science and Technology), Embassy of Japan in India, New Delhi – *Special Remarks*
- **Mr Takuma Otaki**, METI Representative for South Asia and Director JETRO India, New Delhi
- **Dr Sabyasachi Saha**, Associate Professor, RIS, New Delhi
- **Mr Jayanta Chakravorty**, Founder, Asentrek Global, Kolkata
- **Ms Anurita Das**, Partner - Big Data Technology, Business Brio, Kolkata

Q&A

13.00 – 13.45 Lunch Break

13.45 – 15.00 Session II: Strengthening Economic Relations: Trade, Investment, and Value Chains

Chair: Professor Ajitava Raychaudhuri, Distinguished Professor, Adamas University, Kolkata

Panellists:

- **Professor Makoto Kojima**, Professor Emeritus, Takushoku University and Senior Fellow, Center for Contemporary Indian Studies, Japan-India Association, Tokyo – *Special Remarks*
- **Mr Siddharth Deshmukh**, President, Indo-Japan Business Council (IJBC), Pune
- **Dr Priyadarshi Dash**, Associate Professor, RIS, New Delhi
- **Mr Sanjay Chatterjee**, Regional Chairman, NASSCOM Eastern India, Kolkata
- **Mr Sumanta Ganguli**, Deputy Chief Regional Officer, Kolkata Branch, Mitsui & Co., Kolkata

Q&A

15.00 – 15.15 Tea/Coffee Break

15.15 – 16.30 Session III: Building People-to-People Contacts and Cultural Collaboration: New Opportunities

Chair: Dr Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS, Kolkata

Panellists:

- **Mr Koji Sato**, Director General, Japan Foundation, New Delhi – *Special Remarks*
- **Professor Shantanu Chakraborty**, Professor, Calcutta University, Kolkata

- **Professor Gita A. Keeni**, Professor & Head of the Department of Japanese Studies, Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan
- **Dr Madhuchanda Ghosh**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Presidency University, Kolkata
- **Dr Sarmistha De Basu**, Secretary, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies (KSAS), Kolkata

Q&A

16.30 – 17.45 Session IV: India’s Northeast and Emerging Trilateral of India, Japan and Bangladesh

Chair: **Dr Shiladitya Chatterjee**, Formerly Advisor, Government of Assam, and Director, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Kolkata

Panellists:

- **Mr Hajime Taniguchi**, Dy. Chief Representative, JICA India, New Delhi - *Special Remarks (Online)*
- **Mr Orita Kentaro**, Counsellor, Embassy of Japan, New Delhi
- **Mr Sabyasachi Dutta**, Executive Director, Asian Confluence, Shillong
- **Ms Afrin Mahbub**, Programme Associate (Research), Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka
- **Mr Atanu Basu**, Chief, TM International Logistics, Tata Steel, Kolkata

Q&A

19.00 Cultural Programme and Dinner (by invitation)

Day II: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

09.00 – 10.15 Special Panel on Accelerated Partnership for Regional Development

Chair: **Professor S. K. Mohanty**, Professor, RIS, New Delhi

Panellists:

- **Mr Nikhilesh Giri**, Consul General of India in Osaka (*Online Special Remarks*)
- **Mr Rathendra Raman**, Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata *Special Remarks*
- **Mr So Umezaki**, Director, Economic Integration Studies Group, Development Studies Center, IDE-JETRO, Chiba
- **Dr Prabir De**, Professor, RIS, New Delhi

Q&A

10.15 – 11.30 Session V: Japan and India in Bay of Bengal: Economic Opportunities and Challenges

Chair: Professor Lau Sim-Yee, Professor, Reitaku University, Tokyo

Panellists:

- **Mr Takashi Suzuki**, Chief Director General, JETRO New Delhi - *Special Remarks*
- **Dr Rajeev Singh**, Director General, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Kolkata
- **Mr Pranav Kumar**, Vice-President, Reliance Industries, New Delhi
- **Mr Ajay Rana**, Deputy General Manager & Regional Head, Kolkata Regional Office, EXIM Bank of India, Kolkata
- **Mr Udayan Bhattacharya**, Principal, Strategic Design & Digital Transformation, Nomura Research Institute (NRI) Consulting & Solutions India, Kolkata

Q&A

11.30 – 11.45 Tea/Coffee Break

11.45 – 13.00 Session VI: Closing Panel: Fostering India-Japan Economic Relations: Way Forward

Chair: Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, New Delhi

Panellists:

- **Ambassador Shahidul Haque**, Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Chair at Delhi University, Delhi
- **Professor Lau Sim-Yee**, Professor, Reitaku University, Tokyo
- **Mr Arindam Mukherjee**, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata
- **Dr Nilanjan Ghosh**, Director, Observer Research Foundation (ORF) Kolkata
- **Mr Subhodip Ghosh**, Director General, Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I), Kolkata

Q&A

13.00 – 13.30 Closing Session

Chair: Professor Radharaman Chakraborty, Chairman, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata

Valedictory Address: Dr Ashok Chawla, Advisor, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA),
New Delhi

Vote of Thanks: Dr Prabir De, Professor, RIS, New Delhi

13.30 Lunch and End of the Conference



CONCEPT NOTE

The Context

The India-Japan economic relationship has seen a significant change in the last two decades, more particularly after the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Japan has been one of India's most important trading partners, and the two countries have a long history of economic engagements that has grown stronger in recent years. Besides active engagement in bilateral trade and investment, in recent years both countries have embarked upon a number of initiatives and agreements to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation. India and Japan are also partners in many regional initiatives including the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), and founders of multilateral bodies such as the WTO.

India, Japan and countries in Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia are civilizational partners. They share Asian values, heritage and culture. Three of them are comprehensive strategic partners. Today, India-Japan-ASEAN relation is perhaps passing through its best phase. India and Japan have scaled up the partnership into "Global Partnership" level. Japan's Presidency of the G7 and India's Presidency of G20 in 2023 provided new scope to efforts towards shaping the global order. Both have responded to global challenges together, and have been driving the Indo-Pacific from the front. Along with trade and investment the nature and scope of development cooperation between India and Japan has widened. In addition to a wide range of bilateral engagements, the active participation of India and Japan in regional initiatives like Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) and in multilateral institutions like the WTO, UN, etc. are prominently noticed. Quite obviously, the multidimensional spectrum of India and Japan relations is, thus, widened and so also shared responsibilities. Interestingly, seven out of 10 ASEAN member states are also members of the IPEF which strengthens the regional engagements of both the countries in Asia.

Emerging Contours of India-Japan Relations

Indo-Pacific Cooperation

The global economy is passing through turbulent times. Japan-India partnership has been playing a catalytic role in strengthening the global relation. For example, "Japan-India Special Strategic Global Partnership", "ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" and "ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" have been working towards a peaceful world. They aim for rules-based Indo-Pacific and there are many areas of convergence between them in the Indo-Pacific visions. In his last state visit to India, Prime Minister Kishida introduced the new version

of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) building on four pillars of partnership and described India as an “indispensable partner for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific”. The four pillars of the FOIP, as presented by Prime Minister Kishida:

- Pillar 1: Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity
- Pillar 2: Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way
- Pillar 3: Multi-layered Connectivity
- Pillar 4: Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the “Sea” to the “Air”

There is synergy between India’s Act-East Policy, Indo-Pacific vision based on the principle of SAGAR, and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) on one hand, and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision on the other. Japan has agreed to lead cooperation on the Trade, Connectivity, and Maritime Transport pillar of IPOI. Japan has also joined India-led initiatives such as International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT). India and Japan are also cooperating under the Japan-Australia-India-US Quad framework and India-Japan-Australia Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

Trade and Investment

One of the key drivers of the India-Japan trade relationship is the India-Japan CEPA, which was implemented in 2011. The CEPA is a comprehensive agreement that covers trade in goods, trade in services, and investment. This agreement has helped reduce barriers to trade between the two countries, making it easier for businesses to trade and invest in each other’s markets. Bilateral trade between the two countries has increased from US\$ 18 billion in 2011-12 to US\$ 22 billion in 2022-23. However, a large part of bilateral trade is yet to be unlocked. The good side of India-Japan relations is that India has received US\$ 43 billion FDI inflow from Japan and more particularly, a higher amount in the post-CEPA period. This rising trend of FDI inflows from Japan to India indeed helped to lift up confidence in the CEPA. The changing profile of bilateral trade and investment flows calls for a review of the current trends and challenges that the traders in both the countries face, and to explore new areas/sectors of cooperation.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

On the connectivity front, India’s focus is primarily on both physical and digital connectivity. In addition to trade, India and Japan have also been cooperating in other areas, such as infrastructure development and defence. India has been looking to Japan for investment and expertise in infrastructure projects like the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the Mumbai-Ahmadabad High-Speed Rail. Japan has also been a key supplier of defence equipment to India in recent years. This project is being jointly developed by the two countries, and it is expected to have a significant impact on economic growth in India. Japan is seriously considering investment in Northeast India, and is keen to spread development cooperation across the country. Japan and India have started consultation process on development cooperation projects in Northeast.

Both held the seventh meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum (AEF) on 19 February 2024 in New Delhi. Act East Forum was set up following the meeting between the prime ministers of India and Japan in 2017 with two main objectives: (i) the development of the Northeastern Region of India and (ii) to promote connectivity within this region and between this region and Southeast Asia. As part of the Act East Forum, India and Japan have reviewed progress of the cross-border survey for improving trade and logistics between India and Bangladesh through Northeast, and ongoing projects in various areas including connectivity, new and renewable energy, urban development, forest management, skill development, agriculture and fisheries, healthcare, capacity building in disaster resilient infrastructure, agro-industries, tourism and cultural exchange, and Japanese language education.

India and Japan partnership may lead to strengthening the trade and investment relations and improvement in connectivity in Northeast India. There are shared responsibilities in the areas of climate, energy and development cooperation. Identifying the mitigation measures to the emerging challenges will pave the way for deeper India-Japan relations. In other words, India-Japan renewed partnership may lead to reshape not only the bilateral relation but also Bay of Bengal cooperation and the Indo-Pacific.

Maritime Economy

Maritime cooperation is one of the core areas of the 'special strategic and global partnership' between the two countries. India and Japan depend on oceans for trade. Most of their merchandise trade is carried via crucial International Sea Lanes (ISLs). Oceans are also source of vital energy and blue economy. India and Japan face many common challenges in the areas of maritime economy and connectivity. The India-Japan Maritime Bilateral Exercise (JIMEX) between the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) has been held regularly since its inception in 2012. India and Japan may undertake initiatives in the area of maritime domain, which fits well in the fourth pillar of the FOIP and seventh pillar of Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). Development of ports, shipping, inland water transport, etc. could be some of the major areas in enhancing maritime cooperation between the two countries. Both can reactivate the AAGC. India and Japan together can enhance the maritime law enforcement capabilities of the countries, including Bay of Bengal and Pacific Island nations.

Fintech

Application of financial technology (fintech) has received significant attention in many countries of the world especially its role in achieving financial inclusion. Dramatic growth in UPI-enabled retail payment transactions is a testimony to the growing fintech phenomenon in India. On the other hand, Japan being a leading industrialized economy in Asia is witnessing increasing pace of fintech adoption for businesses and innovation. Japan and India have been building strategic partnerships in the financial sector. Japan-India Financial Cooperation Dialogue has

been held regularly and it was upgraded to higher level recently. Gujarat International Finance Tec City (Gift City) has signed an agreement with Fintech Association of Japan (FAJ) to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the fintech domain. Given the potential of fintech sector for catalysing economic activity and job creation in India, India and Japan can explore the possibility of greater bilateral cooperation in fintech and fintech-enabled sectors. There are opportunities of cooperation in the areas of financial inclusion, cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain and human augmentation. India's recent push for bilateral cross-border payment settlements with Singapore, the UAE, Mauritius and Sri Lanka indicate a potential area of cooperation between India, Japan and other countries in the Bay of Bengal region. Linkage of fast payment systems of India and Japan may also be explored to leverage the power of fintech and make cross-border payments more efficient and less costly.

India- Japan-Bangladesh Trilateral

Japan has shown keenness in partnering several development projects in India's Northeastern region through the "Japan-India Act East Forum". Japan's development cooperation with India's neighbouring countries particularly Bangladesh indicates scope for trilateral cooperation among India, Japan and Bangladesh. For instance, Japan is one of the most trusted development partners of Bangladesh. Japan has been assisting Bangladesh in the development of deep-sea port, economic zone, and industrial infrastructure, among others. Likewise, India is assisting Bangladesh in setting up economic zones, development of waterways, inland infrastructure, etc. Moreover, Joint Study Group Reports for the CEPA between India and Bangladesh as well as between Bangladesh and Japan have been completed. These provide solid building blocks to deepen trilateral cooperation between the three countries. Over the years, trade and investment between them have grown and so also the facets of development cooperation have widened. The comprehensive India-Japan-Bangladesh trilateral relation has high potential to shape regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal. India's recent G20 presidency offered key inputs to this evolving trilateral partnership. Stronger trilateral partnership may lead to attract investments in India's Northeast and strengthen the connectivity between the three countries.

The Conference

In view of the above, RIS aims to organise an international conference at Kolkata on 11-12 March 2024 on the theme "Bay of Bengal and India-Japan Economic Relations". This conference is part of the various activities planned to commemorate the 40 years of RIS. The participants of the conference will be the think-tanks of India and Japan, representatives of the private industries, practitioners, academicians, etc. Outcomes of the conference will be disseminated in the form of policy briefs, working papers, among others.

PROFILE OF SPEAKERS

(Speakers in Session-wise Order)



Sachin Chaturvedi

Director General, RIS

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi is currently Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). He works on issues related to development economics, involving development finance, SDGs and South-South Cooperation, apart from trade, investment and innovation linkages with special focus on WTO. Professor Chaturvedi has persistently endeavored to build up institutions and launching of networks, both at national and international levels. He is credited with the launch of Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) and Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC). He has also created “Delhi Process”, a major forum for exchange of ideas on South-South and triangular Cooperation. He has been part of several important initiatives of the Government of India and takes keen interest in transforming economic policymaking towards integrated and evidence-based approaches. He has authored/edited more than 22 books, apart from contributing several chapters in the edited volumes and publishing several research articles in prestigious journals. He is on the Editorial Board of several journals including the South Asian Economic Journal, IDS Bulletin, Sussex, UK among others. His book “The Logic of Sharing – Indian Approach to South-South Cooperation” has been acclaimed internationally as one of the best volumes on international development cooperation. Professor Sachin Chaturvedi was also the ‘Global Justice Fellow’ at the MacMillan Center for International Affairs at Yale University (2009-2010) and has served as a Visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and was a Developing Country Fellow at the University of Amsterdam (1996), Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (2003), and Visiting Scholar at the German Development Institute (2007). Currently, Prof. Chaturvedi is also an Independent Director on the Board of Reserve Bank of India.



Sujan Chinoy

Director General, MP-IDSA, New Delhi

Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy is a former Indian diplomat and currently serving as the Director General of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) since 3rd January 2019. He spent more than thirty-seven years as a professional diplomatic career spanning with experience on China and East Asia, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, the Gulf and OIC, United Nations (Disarmament and International Security), National Security, as well as the US and the Latin American region. He held the highest rank of Grade I Ambassador (equivalent to Vice Minister/Secretary to the Government of India). He was Indian Ambassador to Japan from 2015-2018. He was also the Indian Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He facilitated the visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan in 2016 and 2018 as well as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visits to India in 2015 and 2017. He also served as India's representative to the First Committee at the United Nations in New York dealing with Disarmament & International Security Affairs and in the Indian Mission in Riyadh. At Headquarters, in the Ministry of External Affairs, he served as Director (China) as well as Head of the Expert Group of Diplomatic & Military Officials tasked with CBMs and boundary-related issues with China. He also served on the Americas Desk dealing with the USA and Canada, and as Officer on Special Duty in charge of press relations in the External Publicity Division.



Koichi Nakagawa

Consul-General, Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata

Mr. Koichi Nakagawa, born on July 26, 1961, in Kyoto Prefecture, has had a distinguished career in the Japanese Foreign Service. A graduate of Kinki University's (Faculty of Economics) in 1985, Mr Koichi joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan. His early assignments included serving as Vice-Consul in Pretoria and various roles within MOFA, focusing on economic cooperation and international peace. His expertise in international relations led him to the United Nations as a First Secretary and later to significant positions within MOFA, including Deputy Director roles in economic policy and cultural cooperation. Most recently, Koichi served as the Director of the Official Guests Division and as Deputy Consul General in Los Angeles before his current appointment as Consul General in Kolkata in 2022.



Gourangalal Das

Joint Secretary (East Asia Division), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

Mr. Gourangalal Das, 48, joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1999. He has held various government positions in the Indian diplomatic missions in Beijing, San Francisco and Washington D.C. Apart from dealing with relations with Japan and China in various capacities in the Headquarter in the Ministry of External Affairs he served in the Prime Minister's Office as Director. As Joint Secretary in the Ministry, he helped set up the Centre for Contemporary China Studies in its initial days and later headed the Americas Division until July 2020. In July 2023, he returned to the Ministry after a stint outside government and assumed charge as Joint Secretary in the East Asia Division. Mr. Das holds Masters' degree in Economics from Delhi School of Economics and Masters' degree in Translation and Interpretation in Chinese from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California (USA).



Prabir De

Professor, RIS, New Delhi

Dr. Prabir De is a Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi. He has over three and half decades of full-time research and teaching experiences in India and abroad. He works in the field of international economics and has research interests in international trade and development. He has been conducting policy research for the Government of India and several national and international organisations including UN agencies and multilateral development banks. Graduated in economics from the Scottish Church College in Kolkata, he did his Masters in economics from the Calcutta University and Ph.D. in economics from the Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He was a Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), Japan; Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI); Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP); and Visiting Senior Fellow of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). He has contributed several research papers in international journals and written books on trade and development.



Radharaman Chakrabarti

Chairman, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata

Professor Radharaman Chakrabarti presently chairman and member of Executive council of MAKIAS, Kolkata. In 1981, Professor Chakrabarti was appointed the first Director of Netaji Institute of Asian Studies, an interdisciplinary research organisation set up by the Government of West Bengal and continued in that position till 1997. In 1997, the newly set up Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal had him as its first Vice Chancellor and soon blossomed into a premier distance learning body in higher education. He was conferred with the distinguished Swami Vivekananda Chair Professorship in Social Sciences by the University of Calcutta. A delegate to numerous national and international conferences and contributor to learned journals, the numerous publications of Professor Chakrabarti include the following major works: Intervention and the Problem of International Control, Theories and Practice of International Politics, The Political Economy of India's Foreign Policy, Ethnicity and Ethno-nationalism (ed), Alternative Approaches to IR theories (ed), India's External Relations in a Globalized World Economy, Sri Lanka : Government & Politics. He pursued his education from Presidency College, University of Calcutta and the University of London. He was a Commonwealth Research Scholar at the London School of Economics (1966-69) where he completed his PhD in International Relations.

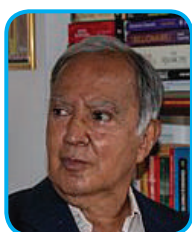


Sibi George

Ambassador of India to Japan

Amb. Sibi George is Ambassador of India to Japan. Earlier he served as Ambassador to Switzerland, The Holy See and The Principality of Liechtenstein and Ambassador of India to Kuwait. He joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1993. He began his diplomatic career in Cairo where he served in the Mission as Political Officer. Subsequently he moved to Indian Embassy in Doha where he handled Consular, Community, Information and Media affairs as First Secretary. Later, he served as Political Counsellor in Indian High Commission in Islamabad and as Political Counsellor and Commercial Counsellor at Indian Embassy in Washington DC. He also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Indian Missions in Tehran and Riyadh. At Headquarters of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi, he served in East Asia Division and as coordinator of India - Africa Forum Summit. He later headed Administration, Establishment and Welfare Divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs. In 2014, MEA conferred on him S.K. Singh Award for Excellence in IFS. A gold medallist both for his graduation and

post-graduation, he also studied in American University in Cairo. He was also trained at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie; Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), New Delhi; Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad; Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi; and Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad



Krishnan Srinivasan

Former Foreign Secretary of India

Amb. Krishnan Srinivasan (born 1937) is a retired Indian diplomat, historian, author, former Indian Foreign Secretary, and Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations. He was born in Madras, India and educated at Bedford School and Christ Church, Oxford. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in May 1959. His early postings included Oslo, Beirut, and Tripoli. He was India's Ambassador/High Commissioner to Zambia and Botswana, Nigeria, Benin and Cameroon, the Netherlands and Bangladesh. He was appointed Secretary and finally Foreign Secretary and retired in 1995. In 1995, he was appointed Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs in London where he served until 2002. He was a member of Christ Church, Oxford's Senior Common Room and High Table from 1998 to 2016. He was also Fellow in various premier institutes and universities such as Centre for International Studies Cambridge (2002–05), Institute of Commonwealth Studies London (2002–08), Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies (2003–04), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata (2006- 2015) and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study at Uppsala in (2008 and 2012–13). He was elected Honorary Professor at ASCI Hyderabad in 2005. He was awarded a Hind Ratna in 2002 by non-resident Indians for services to their community and was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Valeur (Cameroon) in 2007.



Akenori Horimoto

Senior Fellow, Contemporary Indian Studies of Japan-India Association

Dr. Takenori Horimoto is a Visiting Professor of Gifu Women's University and Senior Fellow of Contemporary Indian Studies of Japan-India Assoc. He specialises in history of India's politics and foreign policy. He has authored and edited 16 books including Contemporary India's political history, India as the third world power: pursuit for autonomous foreign policy, India-Japan Relations in Emerging Asia, Introduction to Contemporary Japan-India Relations, Future Directions of India: The changing World and the Modi

Government. In addition, he has published 210 articles in books and periodical and delivered 361 Lectures, TV commentators and presentations in Japan, India, the US etc. He holds a Ph.D in political science.



Ambarish Dasgupta

Chairman, Inteuri, Kolkata

Mr. Ambarish Dasgupta is a management consultant with more than 35 years of experience. He was a Consulting Leader at PwC India and a member of the PwC India leadership team. After PwC, he has been the national consulting leader in KPMG and a part of the leadership team as well. Currently, he is the Senior Partner at Inteuri Consulting LLP, a Management Consulting firm that he has started. He is a senior Advisor for a Global Consulting firm called Protiviti. Additionally, he is serving on the Board of a few companies and is part of the Governance team at several Institutes.



Milan Kumar Sanyal

Emeritus Professor, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata

Dr. Milan K. Sanyal has carried out significant research work in the fields of Materials Physics and synchrotron X-ray scattering. Few examples of his research results are tunable optical properties of semiconductor quantum-dots, charge density wave state in conducting polymer nanowires with optically tunable energy-gap, ordering of organic films in Liquid interfaces and stripe-to-skyrmion phase-transition in topological magnetic films. He is an elected Fellow of all three Science Academies in India and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). Prof. Sanyal is a former Director and an Emeritus Professor in Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics.



Ryuhei Nishi

First Secretary (Science and Technology), Embassy of Japan in India

Mr. Nishi Ryuhei works at the Embassy of Japan, First Secretary in charge of Science and Technology, Grassroots Grant Assistance program. He was assigned from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to his current position from October 2021. At MEXT, he had overseen space policy, quantum technology, and science and technology human resource development. He was also in charge of reforming university education and international education at the compulsory education level.



Takuma Otaki

METI Representative for South Asia and Director of JETRO India, New Delhi.

Mr. Takuma Otaki is presently METI representative for South Asia and Director of JETRO India, New Delhi. A prior to JETRO, Mr Otaki was Deputy Director of various divisions such as Nuclear Energy Policy Planning Division, Electricity Infrastructure Division and New Energy System Division at Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). In METI he has worked in various projects such as implementing industrial research, especially for Semiconductor, Digital and Hydrogen, drafting Industrial cooperation plan between Bangladesh and Japan, Researched and drafted a new law which prescribed the rules of providing official funds for completing nuclear damage compensation, Analyzed the amount of compensation, earnings and expenses of Tokyo Electric Power which caused the nuclear accident in 2011, Drafted a law which outlined in detail the full liberalization of entry to electricity retail business, Drafted a law which improved the rule of feed-in tariff which gives incentives to introduce renewable energy equipment. He was also a special advisor in Planning department of Tokyo Electric Power Company. In Tokyo Electric Power Co, he Worked with internal engineers to draft sales strategy for hydrogen-related equipment to factories, oversaw Business Investment Management; Drafting investment plans for hydropower plants in Nepal and the Mekong River, developed strategy for sales of electricity in Japan and Update mid- to long-term plan for decommissioning of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant along with reviewing necessary expenses.

Sabyasachi Saha

Associate Professor, RIS, New Delhi



Dr. Sabyasachi Saha is Associate Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi since 2021. He has been Assistant Professor at RIS (2014-2020) and full-time Consultant at RIS during 2013-14. He specialises in innovation economics, trade and technology, international trade, technology and development policy. He has co-edited two volumes published by Springer. He has regularly participated in official policy forums at the UN Headquarters and other UN led platforms and has been an active contributor on partnerships, regional cooperation and technology facilitation for SDGs. He has also been contributing to G20, BRICS and South-Asia Think-Tank forums and networks. He has also contributed as Member of the Thematic Group on Sustainable Technologies for Govt. of India's forthcoming Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020. He obtained his PhD (2013) and M.Phil (2009) from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. He is a recipient of the WIPO Prize for Young Scholars, DAAD funded fellowship of the Government of Germany and

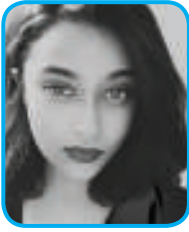
Government of India Travel Award. As PhD scholar he has participated in numerous academic conferences globally including at the National University of Singapore, Georgia Tech, University of Warsaw, and HTW University of Applied Sciences, Berlin. Before joining RIS, he worked as senior research staff at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). He is also the current Editor of the South Asia Economic Journal published by Sage. At RIS he coordinates two annual Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) capacity building courses of the Government of India attended by officials, scholars and diplomats from partner developing countries. He has also played important roles in organization of high-level policy dialogues and conferences in India and abroad.



Jayanta Chakravorty

Founder, Asentrek Global, Kolkata

Dr. Jayanta Chakravorty, Co-Founder of Asentrek Global, boasts a prestigious career spanning over 25 years as a renowned business strategist, consultant, and coach. Recognized as a Top 100 Global Influencer by Piktale Social Media Group in 2021, Dr. Chakravorty has guided countless businesses, from MSMEs to startups, in accelerating growth and refining marketing strategies. His expertise is sought after by CEOs, marketing leaders, and corporate innovators worldwide. Dr. Chakravorty has shared his ideas in many National & International Forums, Trade bodies like AI for India, IIT, NASSCOM, TiE, ASSOCHAM, BCCI etc, while also mentoring at IIT Guwahati. He has conducted transformative workshops for renowned brands such as TATA and LIC. Committed to social upliftment, he actively collaborates with organizations like the Ramkrishna Mission. He also has advisory roles for various industry bodies and chambers of commerce, including the Federation of Association of Small Industries of India and the MSME Chamber of Commerce. His articles are featured in leading publications like Entrepreneur Magazine and The Business India. He did his PhD in Psychology, MBA(HR), NLP Master, ICF & CCE accredited Coach, IIM Lucknow alumnus, Marshall Goldsmith Stake Holder Executive Coach with Global leadership Coaching expertise.



Anurita Das

Partner- Big Data Technology, Business Brio, Kolkata

Ms Anurita - partner Big Data Technologies for Business Brio - a data science company, has been a technologist, specialised on AI and a serial entrepreneur in Japan, South Korea and India. Having spent several years on NASA Core Program on AI, Anurita has patents and publications to her credit while leading a team at Business Brio for AI product frameworks listed on Microsoft Azure marketplace. She is leading cutting edge AI solution development for some of the biggest brands in aerospace and automobiles in the world. Having spent several years in far east during her entrepreneurial journey, Anurita is well versed in Japanese and Korean language both spoken and written. She also enjoys her role as a mentor to young and budding technology and AI aspirants. She has a micro-masters from MIT, USA.



Ajitava Raychaudhuri

Distinguished Professor, Adamas University, Kolkata

Dr Ajitava Raychaudhuri is Distinguished Professor at the Adamas University and former Head and Coordinator of Centre for Advanced Studies, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. He was a senior Fulbright Scholar at Economic Growth Center, Yale University and Reid Hall Scholar in Residence of Columbia University, Paris Campus. He was visiting faculty at Indian Statistical Institute (Calcutta), Calcutta University and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (Calcutta). He had undertaken several important projects from UNESCAP, ADB, World Bank, UNDP, PEP, GDN, IPPG, SANEI, Finance Commission, Planning Commission etc. He has also written numerous papers in international and national journals and edited books. Among his notable books are India's Exports: An Analytical Study and International Trade in Services in India: Implications for Growth and Inequality in a Globalising World, both published by Oxford University Press. He also authored two District Human Development Reports for West Bengal published by UNDP and Planning Commission of India. His latest edited book is on Myanmar's Integration with the World, published as Palgrave Macmillan series by Springer. He holds a Ph.D degree from American University (USA).



Makoto Kojima

Professor Emeritus, Takushoku University, Japan, Tokyo

Dr. Makoto Kojima is Professor Emeritus at Takushoku University where he served as a professor of the Indian studies. He is now a senior fellow at the Japan-India Association. He holds a Ph.D. from Keio University. He was a member of the Japan-India Joint Study Group in 2004-05. He is an author of many books, including *The Indian Software Industry (Japanese)* and *Tata Group (Japanese)*. He contributed many articles, including “Industrialization, Income Distribution and Labour Migration, the Case of India,” in Sukhamoy Chakravarty (ed.) *The Balance between Industry and Agriculture in Economic Development, Volume 3 Manpower and Transfers* (Macmillan Press, 1988).



Siddharth Deshmukh

President, Indo-Japan Business Council (IJBC), Pune

Mr. Siddharth Deshmukh is a highly accomplished serial entrepreneur with extensive experience in software product engineering and international business. In 2005, he founded Shimbi Labs, a leading software product engineering company. He also co-founded the Indo-Japan Business Council (IJBC) in 2011 and currently serves as its President. Under his exemplary leadership, IJBC has achieved remarkable milestones, fostering strong business, trade, education, and cultural ties between India and Japan. Mr. Deshmukh has successfully facilitated multiple Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) between IJBC and prestigious Japanese organisations, establishing a vast network of influential business leaders. Furthermore, Mr. Deshmukh is an accomplished speaker, visiting faculty member at esteemed institutions, and an active participant in prominent business associations. specialization, Income Distribution and Labour Migration, the Case of India,” in Sukhamoy Chakravarty (ed.) *The Balance between Industry and Agriculture in Economic Development, Volume 3 Manpower and Transfers* (Macmillan Press, 1988).



Priyadarshi Dash

Associate Professor, RIS, New Delhi

Dr. Priyadarshi Dash is Associate Professor at Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi, India. He was a Co-Chair of Think20 (T20) Task Force-5 (Purpose & Performance: Reassessing the Global Financial Order) for Indian G20 Presidency. Presently, he is Co-Chair of T20 Task Force-3 (Reforming the International Financial Architecture) for the G20 Brazilian Presidency. Dr. Dash has 15 years of experience in policy

research on macroeconomic policy, infrastructure financing, green finance and fintech issues in the context of G20, IORA, BIMSTEC and Indo-Pacific. He has published two books titled 'Asia-Africa Growth Corridor: Development and Cooperation in Indo-Pacific' and 'Universal Banking in India: Evolution, Trends and Performance' and several papers in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. He is member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Cambridge Scholars Publishing, London and Advances in Economics and Business; Member of Editorial Review Board of Virtual Economics; Managing Editor of G20 Digest, and Co-Editor of Journal of Asian Economic Integration. Dr. Dash holds M.Phil (Planning & Development) and PhD in Economics from IIT Bombay.



Sanjoy Chatterjee

Regional Chairman, NASSCOM Eastern India, Kolkata

An engineer with experiences from Tata Motors and Tata Technologies, Sanjoy started his entrepreneurial journey 15 years ago, founding Ideation Technology Solutions, Ideal Analytics Solutions, Entiovi Technologies and start-ups in the domains of Defence, Healthcare, Transportation and Environment Tech, developing software products & solutions in the areas of Analytics & Data Science, IoT and Enterprise Mobility. Sanjoy is also the Chair of NASSCOM East. He is also Member, SPM Group, Smart Pandemic Management Centre. UC Berkeley, Governing Body member of EKTA Incubation Centre, MAKAUT, West Bengal and Member of Board of Studies, College of Management, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata. Sanjoy received his M.Tech. from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.



Sumanta Ganguli

Deputy Chief Regional Officer, Kolkata Branch, Mitsui & Co., Kolkata

Mr. Sumanta Ganguli graduated from Bengal Engineering College in 1987 and has been in Corporates since then. He has worked across sectors like Non-Ferrous Metals, Packaging and Polymers in companies like Indian Aluminum, Reliance Industries and Haldia Petrochemicals. He joined Basic Chemicals division of Mitsui & Co. India Pvt. Ltd. in 2004 in International Trade. He is currently the Deputy Chief Regional Officer for their Kolkata Office.



Sarup Prasad Ghosh

Director, MAKAIAS, Kolkata

Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh studied in South Point School, Kolkata, Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, St. Xavier's College and Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He has served as Registrar, Dean of Academics and Controller of Examinations in different academic institutes of repute and at present, the Director of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata. His doctoral dissertation was entitled "Swami Vivekananda's Views on The Role of Religion And Caste In India's Social Political Life: A Contemporary Perspective". His main field of study is Social Sciences. Dr. Ghosh is also associated with the Ramakrishna Mission for a long period. He has written numerous articles in all standard newspapers and journals published from Kolkata and attended several Seminars/ Conferences/ Workshops/ Symposiums all throughout India. He is a known commentator in television channels of Kolkata. Being an orator, he has participated in different debate competitions conducted by different newspaper groups and television channels of Kolkata. He has received awards from different organizations in India. He has worked as Registrar under Padma Shree Professor Ramaranjan Mukherjee when he was the Chairman of the Board of Governors at that time. He has served as Dean of Academics and Controller of Examinations under Professor Ashok Ranjan Thakur who was the Vice-Chancellor at that time. He is a Court Member of the Sikkim University (a Central University) located at Gangtok, Sikkim.



Koji Sato

Director General, Japan Foundation, New Delhi

Mr. Koji Sato is the current Director General of the Japan Foundation, New Delhi. He has taken up this position in January 2021 and this is his second assignment at the Japan Foundation, New Delhi. He joined the Japan Foundation in 1995, and prior to the current assignment, he has served at oversea offices of the Japan Foundation in Cairo, Egypt, and Yangon, Myanmar besides New Delhi. At the Japan Foundation's headquarters, he has been assigned at the Asia Centre as Director, while also having served at various other departments of the Foundation. He is an alumnus of the School of Law, Hokkaido University.



Shantanu Chakrabarti

Professor, University of Calcutta, Kolkata

Dr. Shantanu Chakrabarti is Professor in the Department of History, University of Calcutta, India. He is the honorary president of the Association of European Studies in India (AESI). He has been a Research Fellow in the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi, India (2007-08). He was awarded the Bene Merito medal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Poland in 2014. He is the deputy editor in chief in the editorial board of *Stosunki Międzynarodowe-International Relations*, Journal of the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw and a member in the Advisory Board of the UNISCI (Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation), University of Madrid, Spain. He has invited as a visiting faculty at several institutions including Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Cambridge University UK, University of Warsaw, UMCS, Lublin, Poland, Uppsala University, Sweden, Aarhus University and Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Denmark, He was selected for the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) India Chair at Dublin City University, Ireland



Gita A. Keeni

Professor & Head of the Department of Japanese Studies, Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan

Dr. Gita A. Keeni is Professor and Head of the Department of Japanese, Visva-Bharati. She possesses dual master's degree from the University of Calcutta and Tokyo Woman's Christian University. Recipient of Japan Foundation fellowship, she conducted major part of her doctoral research at The International Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan while being enrolled with the University of Calcutta. Her publications include translations of Japanese literature into Bengali and papers on Japanese Language, Literature, Socio-Cultural Studies, Paremiology, Tagore & Japan and Gender issues, in Japanese, English and Bengali. Her latest major work is as the editor of the Conference Volume titled 'Rabindranath Tagore and Japan: Tagore and Japan & Various Aspects of Japanese Culture'. Presently she is engaged in editing the Conference Volume titled 'Santiniketan – A Bridge between Indian and Japan & Various Aspects of Japan' (in press).



Madhuchanda Ghosh

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Presidency University, Kolkata

Dr. Madhuchanda Ghosh is a senior Assistant Professor at Department of Political Science, Presidency University, with specialization in India-Japan relations. She has been a recipient of Fulbright Academic and Professional Excellence Award and Visiting Scholar at Asia Center of Harvard University under Fulbright program (2022). She has been a Visiting Japan Foundation Scholar Long Term (2014), Short Term (2011), SYLFF Tokyo Foundation Scholar (2006) and Visiting Scholar at Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge University (2019). Forthcoming edited book with Prof. Harsh V. Pant, *Natural Partners: India and Japan's Strategic Convergence in the Indo-Pacific*, Orient Blackswan.



Sarmistha De Basu

Honorary Secretary, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies, Kolkata

Dr. Sarmistha De Basu is M.A. and PhD in Bengali from Rabindra Bharati University. She has been involved in research programs of different premier institutes on Folklore and Cultural Studies, served as guest faculty. She has contributed to the area of Folk Dances, Motif indexing of Folk and Classical Literature, Folk Culture, Narratives of various ethnic groups, review of the Bengali Short Stories on socio-economic background of women, Literary criticism of the work of some established Bengali Poet by publishing books and research articles (more than 35) in national and international journals of repute. She has published one book in her credit and edited several books. She also bears the responsibility as honorary Secretary of the Kolkata Society for Asian Studies and the associate editor of Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.



Shiladitya Chatterjee

Formerly Advisor, Government of Assam and Director, ADB, Kolkata

Dr Shiladitya Chatterjee studied at Presidency College, Calcutta; Delhi School of Economics; and Boston University. He taught economics at St. Stephen's College, Delhi; Boston University; and University of Massachusetts. Prior to joining Asian Development Bank in 1994, he served in the Indian Administrative Service (1976-1994) where he worked with the Government of Assam and later with the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance and in the Prime Minister's Office (1990-1994) where he advised on economic policy issues including the 1991 economic reforms. At ADB he led lending

operations in the Philippines and Indonesia; provided policy advice to countries as Economist; and as Head, Poverty Unit supported ADB's poverty reduction efforts in Asia and the Pacific and forged an ADB-UN Partnership on the MDGs and SDGs. He currently advises domestic and international agencies, particularly on SDGs, as an independent development consultant and advisor; and undertakes research and publications. He is presently President, Global Forum for Sustainable Rural Development; and Visiting Senior Fellow, Institute of Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi.



Hajime Taniguchi

Dy. Chief Representative, JICA India, New Delhi

Mr. Hajime Taniguchi is Dy. Chief Representative at Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) India.



Orita Kentaro

Principal Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan

Mr. Orita Kentaro, Principal Deputy Director at MOFA, brings extensive experience in diplomatic and policy roles. He served as Consular Policy Coordinator and Deputy Director in various divisions, including the Development Assistance Policy Coordination Division and Policy Coordination Division. His tenure includes diplomatic missions at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York. His academic background comprises an M.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University, where he specialized in Foreign Policy and Security. Additionally, he holds a B.A.S. in International Relations/International Law from the University of Tokyo. His expertise spans consular affairs, international law, and economic treaties. His contributions reflect a commitment to advancing Japan's foreign policy objectives with strategic acumen and legal proficiency.



Sabyasachi Dutta

Executive Director, Asian confluence, Shillong

Mr. Sabyasachi Dutta is the co-founder and Executive Director of Asian Confluence. Sabyasachi pioneered the "Third Space" philosophy of the Asian Confluence whereby through a host of programs, the Asian Confluence provides an opportunity for civil society to enhance people to people contact between India and her neighbours and also encourage a better understanding of the cultural and socio-political issues of the region that actually are the

driving force behind policies such as India's "Act East Policy". He leads the Asian Confluence in several track 1.5 and track 2 initiatives, speaks at several prestigious forums. The NADI (Natural Allies in Development and Interdependence) - River dialogues conceived and executed by the Asian Confluence is now a premier track 1.5 dialogue on regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region in partnership with the Governments of India and other countries. He is a core author of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Civil Society Organizations (CSO) vision document for regional cooperation on rivers in the Ganga Brahmaputra Meghna (GBM) region.



Afrin Mahbub

Programme Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka

Ms. Afrin Mahbub is working as a Programme Associate (Research) at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a civil society think tank which promotes inclusive policymaking in Bangladesh. Her research interest lies in environment, trade, FDI, education, and unemployment. Ms Mahbub has undertaken research projects from the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, the Embassy of Denmark, the Embassy of Netherlands in Bangladesh and the International Growth Centre (IGC). Before joining CPD, she worked as an Undergraduate Research Assistant at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). Recently, Ms Mahbub concluded a research project titled "Reducing Air and Plastic Pollution- Towards Green Cities in Bangladesh" where she has conducted primary research on the perceptions individuals hold regarding air and plastic pollution in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She has also co-authored a book titled "Bangladesh-Japan Partnership for the Next Development Journey" where she has observed the trade relationship between Bangladesh and Japan alongside Japanese development assistance provided to Bangladesh, Japanese investments in Bangladesh, and explored various ways Bangladesh can elevate its human capital in light of 4IR with assistance from Japan.



Atanu Basu

Chief, TM International Logistics, Tata Steel, Kolkata

Mr. Atanu Basu is currently Chief, TM International Logistics, Tata Steel Kolkata. He is presently a Member of the ESG Sub-Committee of CII Eastern Region for the period 2023-24 as well. After completed B. Com (Hons.) from University of Calcutta, he pursued MBA from IISWBM in Logistics & Transportation Management. He Completed the internationally acclaimed academic course on Commercial Shipping from Institute of Chartered

Shipbrokers, UK (ICS) and became a Professionally Qualified Member of ICS (MICS). He was also Trained & certified by Tata Management Training Centre, Pune on Tata Group Emerging Leadership Seminar, a highly regarded leadership development program for the nominated executives from various Tata Group organizations. Mr Basu Possesses 25 years of cross-functional & multifaceted experience in Port & Midstream Logistics, Railways, Commercial Shipping, Coastal & Inland Waterways, Cross-Border Logistics focusing on northeast & Bangladesh market, Multimodal Projects, and Supply Chain management especially in steel sector; including areas of strategic planning, new business development, business excellence and leads the corporate sustainability & CSR initiatives for the current employer.

S. K. Mohanty

Professor, RIS, New Delhi



Professor S. K. Mohanty is presently working at Research and Information System for Developing Countries RIS. His research interests include international trade issues, regional trading arrangements, WTO issues, MSMEs, technology-intensive trade, Environmentally Sensitive Goods, Blue Economy, Fishery Subsidy and CGE modelling. He has been working on India's regional economic interest with certain countries including Japan, Mauritius, Oman, China, the US, Canada, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, etc. and regional groupings like SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, BRICS, IBSA, GCC, IPEF, TPP, TTIP, COMESA, CLMV, the European Union, SEO, SACU-India-Mercosur (SIM). He was a member of several Committees set up by the Government of India, including Joint Study Groups (JSGs) reports for initiating FTA negotiations, Committee on GATS Negotiations in WTO by MoCI and Committee for the Twelfth Five Year Plan on Technology Intensity in India's Manufacturing Exports. He taught at JNU as well. He published several papers in both national and international journals. He was the co-chair of the T20 task force on trade and investment during the recent Indian G20 Presidency. He was also Chair of the IORA Academic Group during India's presidency and Academic focal point for more than a decade.

Nikhilesh Giri

Consul General of India in Osaka



Born on 1 June 1978 in Odisha, Mr. Nikhilesh Giri obtained his Master's degree in Geology from Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. He joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 2002. His first posting was in Egypt from 2004 to 2006, where he learnt Arabic at the American University in Cairo. Between 2006 and 2009, he was posted as Second Secretary (Political, Economic & Information)

in Embassy of India, Muscat. He then returned to New Delhi for a two-year stint as Under Secretary/ Deputy Secretary dealing with India's relations with Russia. During 2011-2015, he served in Embassy of India and later in the Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta as First Secretary/ Counsellor. From 2015 to 2018, he was India's Deputy High Commissioner to Malaysia. Upon return to New Delhi in early 2018, he worked as Director in the Indo-Pacific Division. He assumed charge as Joint Secretary of the West Asia & North Africa Division in December of that year and continued in the position till his appointment as Consul General of India in Osaka-Kobe. He has attended training programmes on leadership and management at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; George Washington University, Washington DC; and Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, MA.



Rathendra Raman

Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

Mr. Rathendra Raman, an I.R.T.S. Officer of 1995 batch took over charge as Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP, Kolkata) from 9th May 2023. Before taking over the charge of Chairman, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, he was Chief Freight Traffic Manager (CFTM) in Southeastern Railway. Mr. Raman joined the Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) in 1996 and subsequently headed operations of three divisions of Eastern Railway (ER) for about 13 years between 2002 to 2017, he was awarded General Manager's medal four times: 1998, 2001, 2004, 2012; and Railway Minister's medal in 2006. Later, Mr. Raman joined Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) on deputation as Chief General Manager, Eastern Region, where his achievements included movement of first Container Train to Bangladesh and container movement to Nepal through Jogbani and Batnaha Rail Terminals and commissioning of Balasore and Jharsuguda Inland Container Depot and Container Freight Station at Paradip Port Authority. Mr Raman, as CFTM had been involved with industries such as Coal, Iron ore, Cement, Steel, Powerhouses and Ports. His postings, mostly in the eastern part of the country, have enabled him to acquire a comprehensive idea of its static and dynamic logistic profile, and a grasp of the fascinating inter-play of its contributing factors. Specifically, both Haldia Dock Complex and Kolkata Dock System of SMP Kolkata essentially depend on faster and timely evacuation through Indian Railway, especially of the bulk consignments and containers. Mr. Raman had manifold opportunities to visit and understand Kolkata Port working as Operations In-charge, Sealdah and as CGM, CONCOR. Along the way, training at Antwerp Port, Belgium while with CONCOR, exposed Shri Raman to innovations and novel dimensions in the field. Mr. Raman completed his B.Sc (Hons) and M.Sc (Hons) from Delhi University.



So Umezaki

Director, Economic Integration Studies Group, Development Studies Center, IDE-JETRO, Chiba

Mr. So Umezaki is Director of Economic Integration Studies Group, Development Studies Center in the IDE-JETRO, specialized in economic integration in ASEAN with particular emphasis on the role of transport connectivity. During his temporary assignment to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), he contributed to several flagship projects as the project coordinator including the one on ASEAN-India Connectivity. The extended and updated version of the report, The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Its Possible Eastward Extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam, was published by ERIA in 2020. His latest work, Global Value Chains and Industrial Development: Participation, Upgrading, and Connectivity (co-authored with Ikuo Kuroiwa), will be published soon as a Springer Briefs in Economics.



Lau Sim Yee

Professor, Reitaku University, Japan, Tokyo

Dr. Lau Sim Yee is a Professor at Reitaku University, Japan. He holds a Ph.D. in International Cultural Studies from Tohoku University, Japan. He has a Master of Engineering and a Bachelor of Engineering from Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan. Presently, he is a fellow of Asian Dialogue Society, and he was a fellow of the 21st Century Trust of UK, Salzburg Seminar of Austria. He was columnist of New Straits Times Malaysia from 2019 to 2022. He was a recipient of the best economics paper award in the 7th Asia Pacific Marketing and Management Conference in September 2021.



Takashi Suzuki

Chief Director General, JETRO, New Delhi

Mr. Takashi Suzuki, a Tokyo University of Foreign Studies graduate, has been with JETRO since 1994. He focuses on business promotion work with Asian countries and has been stationed in Nigeria, Belgium, Bangladesh, India, etc. Notable roles in JETRO includes Trade Commissioner in Lagos, Director in Brussels, and Director General in Bengaluru. Since 2022, he has served as Chief Director General of JETRO. His academic background in English and American Languages coupled with extensive work experience positions him as a seasoned leader in fostering international business relations.



Rajeev Singh

Director General, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Kolkata

Dr. Rajeev Singh took over as Secretary General, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata with effect from 1st September, 2006. The designation was revised to Director General ICC afterwards. Prior to his appointment as Secretary General, Dr. Singh was actively involved with CII for more than 5 years as Regional Director, posted in Chandigarh & Ahmedabad and subsequently in Kolkata. He has done extensive work in the fields of Central & State Policy Advocacy, Service Sector, Agro Business, Taxation and Bio-Technology. Dr. Singh has also been involved with expansion of ICC activities in various regions of India and internationally. He was also involved with opening of new ICC offices in New-Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Guwahati, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Siliguri, Agartala, & Bihar Office. Dr. Singh is an invitee member of various Government Committees on Policy matters. He also spearheaded different economic policy reports, sectoral reports etc. In a period spanning over 30 years, Dr. Singh began his career with Rajasthan Oil Federation as Deputy Manager. He was later associated with corporate house like Arvind Mills Limited, etc. Dr. Singh has done his PhD in Management and has also been associated with academics as Professor in Management with Specialization in Marketing.



Pranav Kumar

Vice President, Reliance Industries, New Delhi

Mr. Pranav Kumar has over 27 years of professional experience in International Trade Policy advocacy including international business strategy for private sector, teaching, research, project management with primary expertise on trade and development, multilateral trade negotiations under the aegis of WTO (World Trade Organisation), regional/bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), geo-political developments and their impact on businesses. Since September 2022, he has been working with Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) as Vice President looking after International Trade Policy and related compliance. RIL is India's largest business conglomerate, having its business operation in petroleum, petrochemical, telecommunication, retail, textile, and new energy sectors. Prior to joining RIL, he has worked as head of International Trade Policy with India's apex business chamber Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). As a head of International Trade Policy division of CII, he engaged closely with the Government of India (GoI) and Industry members across all sectors on all aspects of trade negotiation and policy formulation and builds Indian Industry position on International Trade Policy which feeds into the negotiation process for the GoI. Previously he worked as a Senior Trade Policy Advisor with the joint International Trade Policy team (India

Trade Policy Unit) of British High Commission, New Delhi and DFID India. As a member of the India Trade Policy Unit (iTPU), he was responsible for feeding/advising Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of UK on India's trade policy, its stance on WTO Doha round of trade negotiations, EU-India FTA, and IPR (intellectual property rights) related policy changes in India. He was also a member of team responsible for DFID major trade programme with Government of India – UNCTAD-India project on Capacity building on trade and globalisation in India. He holds an M. Phil degree in Economics from Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai.



Ajay Rana

Deputy General Manager & Regional Head, Kolkata Regional Office, EXIM Bank of India, Kolkata

Mr. Ajay Rana is a seasoned development banker with more than 18 years of experience, in various roles and geographies. He joined the Bank in 2006 and is currently spearheading the Bank's Kolkata Regional Office responsible for the operations of the Bank in Eastern India. Prior to this, he was heading the Bank's Washington Office responsible for Bank's operations in North America, Latin America and Caribbean Regions. Mr. Rana has varied professional experience in both commercial and policy business of the Bank which include corporate banking, project finance, cross border acquisition financing, SME lending, structured trade finance and G2G finance. He is an Engineering Graduate from the Kurukshetra University with a Post Graduate Diploma in Banking and Finance from National Institute of Bank Management, Pune and a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers.



Udayan Bhattacharya

Principal, Strategic Design & Digital Transformation, Nomura Research Institute (NRI), Kolkata

Mr. Udayan Bhattacharya is an experienced consultant helping clients navigate their ways through Digital Transformation, Market Expansion and Strategy Development. He has worked extensively with clients for helping them identify and utilize data to develop robust strategies utilizing data science and machine learning concepts. In his current stint, he leads the efforts of the Strategic Design and Digital Transformation group at Nomura Research Institute (India) helping develop collaborative entry and expansion opportunities for organizations and identify synergies globally across industries, utilizing cutting edge technologies, with a focus on Japan and India.



Shahidul Haque

Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Chair at Delhi University, Delhi

Professor Shahidul Haque, Faculty at North South University, Bangladesh since February 2020, also holds the ICCR Bangabandhu Chair at University of Delhi since March 2022 and is a visiting professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He serves as Senior Advisor on Migration and Humanitarian Policy at IOM, Dhaka from 2020 and advises international charities and consulting firms. Formerly, he was Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary from January 2013 to December 2019, chairing the Global Forum for Migration and Development (2015-2016) and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (2015-2016). He served at IOM in various roles, including Regional Representative for South Asia and the Middle East, and Director for International Cooperation and Policy. He led Bangladesh's delegation in negotiations with Myanmar on the Rohingya issue and chaired the Bangladesh National Task Force on Undocumented Myanmar Nationals. He served two terms as an elected Independent Expert to the Committee on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families. Mr. Haque received his graduate degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, USA, and received his Master's Degree in Social Welfare from Dhaka University, receiving several academic awards. He co-authored "Migration Myth in Policy and Practice" (Springer, 2020) and has written extensively on migration, climate change, human trafficking, and vaccine diplomacy.



Arindam Mukherjee

Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata

Mr Arindam Mukherjee is the Trustee member cum Director of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, an India based think tank. He is also Vice Chairman, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Ministry of Culture, GOI and also Member, Governing Council, Bharat Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata. He obtained his Master's degree in Ancient Indian History and Culture from University of Calcutta in 1999. As a narrator of civilisational history and social activist, Mr Mukherjee has been working to build bridges between India and Indian Ocean Rim countries. With his mission he travelled extensively to many Asian, African and European countries. He authored and edited several books such as The Indian Ocean Civilisation, Sikkim and Her Culture, Indo-Bangladesh Relations, Indo-Myanmar Relations: New Horizon, Sister Nivedita and Her Bharat etc. and he also held solo photographic exhibitions-'Glimpses of Bangladesh' in different venues in India and Bangladesh, supported by Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, Indian High Commission, Dhaka, Ministry of Culture and ICCR. He curated

exhibitions: 'Bengal-Myanmar Relations' (2014), Kolkata and 'Indian Ocean: Sea Fearing Legacy' (2015), Bhubaneswar. He made three documentary films: Famous & Important Buddhist Festival of Sikkim, A Glimpse of Monastic Life in the Sikkim Himalayas and Swami Vivekananda in Bangladesh. He has been awarded 'Anandalok Salaam Bengal Award' (2011) for his contribution in the field of education & culture by ABP Group, Kolkata.



Nilanjan Ghosh

Director, Observer Research Foundation, India

Dr. Nilanjan Ghosh, Director at Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India, heads the Centre for New Economic Diplomacy (CNED) and ORF's Kolkata Centre. Notable roles includes: Member, Global Future Council on the Future of Nature and Security, World Economic Forum 2023; Co-Chair, Task Force 3 on International Financial Architecture, Think20 Brazil Presidency; President, Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE) 2022-24; and Member, Research Advisory Committee, WWF India. His previous roles as follows: Senior Fellow at ORF, Senior VP & Chief Economist at Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited, Mumbai; and faculty at TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi. With a PhD from IIM Calcutta, Dr. Ghosh is a renowned natural resource economist, authoring 14 books, 95+ peer-reviewed papers, and conducted various advisory assignments for organization like IUCN, USAID, and the World Bank.



Subhodip Ghosh

Director General, The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I)

Mr. Subhodip Ghosh has 24 years of experience in Chambers of Commerce (with 22 of them in BCC&I). He is focused on deepening BCC&I's connects with Embassies, Consulates, and multilateral agencies. He is also founder and mentor of BCC&I's Project and Research Division undertaking research based consulting and projects in the International and National spheres. He has published economic / management papers in peer reviewed journals and contributed articles in edited publications and newspapers. He is an alumnus of the US State Department's acclaimed International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). He is a Masters in Economics with Specialization in World Economy from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Staying fit is a major focus. A full Marathoner and Master Diver – long-distance running, open water diving and cycling are three passions



Ashok Chawla

Advisor, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), New Delhi

Professor Ashok Kumar Chawla is currently Advisor (Japan) at East Asia Division, MEA since January 2017. Handling all aspects of India-Japan relations, including coordination of MEA's initiatives of Act East Forum and Japanese Language. He was Chief Scientist & Head International Division & Infrastructure Division at CSIR-NISCAIR till 2016. He is also a visiting professor at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan. Apart from handling overall Indo-Japan relation at MEA, his area of study includes research, commentary and report preparation on Indo-Japan S&T relations at CSIR-NISCAIR for the period of 1983-2016. He is involved in research on various aspects of trans-national communication & terminology studies as part of On-going Translation Training Program of CSIR-NISCAIR as well. He was also involved in various projects in CSIR-NISCAIR on Techniques of Handling Variable Length Records and Variable Length Fields in RDBMS and other projects. He has also taught at various prominent universities such as University of Delhi (lecturer), Jawaharlal University Delhi (JNU) (Guest Faculty), Tokyo International University (Honorary Professor) etc, on translation, interpretation and TQM. He has presented 64 papers, published 31 articles and translated 23 books as well. Professor Ashok Chawla completed Masters in Japanese in 1982 from JNU and graduation in Science (1977) along with Intensive Japanese course (1978) from University of Delhi.

GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE







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Core IV-B, Fourth Floor, India Habitat Centre
Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003 India., Ph. 91-11-24682177-80
Fax: 91-11-24682173-74, Email: dgoffice@ris.org.in
Website: <http://www.ris.org.in>

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