

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) New Hopes and New Opportunities



From left: Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS; Shri Sanjay Kumar Verma, Chairman, RIS ; Shri Surendra Nath Tripathi, DG, IIPA and Member Governing body, SIOS; Ambassador Sudhir Devare, Former Diplomat at IMEC conference.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is being viewed as a promising initiative with great potential for improving connectivity, expanding trade, and investment, promoting energy cooperation, diversification of global supply chains, among others. Recognising its strategic significance in view of the evolving geo-economic landscape, RIS in partnership with the Society for Indian Ocean Studies (SIOS) hosted a day-long conference on the theme 'India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC): New Hopes and New Opportunities' on 19 March 2025 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

The conference focused on deliberations upon key issues such as the benefits of economic corridors for inclusive development,

potential for strengthening multimodal connectivity, sectoral cooperation in ports, shipping, cooperation in energy and climate action, as well as skills, financing, and collaboration. Experts and practitioners from India and Europe contributed to the rich discussion on important facets of IMEC. Some prominent experts included Ambassador Sudhir Devare, Former Diplomat, Dr. Rajat M. Nag, Former Managing Director, ADB; Ms. Shyamala Gopinath, Former Deputy Governor, RBI; Mr Ikumo Isono, Director, Economic Geography Studies Group, IDE-JETRO; Mr. Nicola Missaglia, Head of India Center, Italian Institute of International Political Studies (ISPI), Rome; Dr Axel Berger, Deputy Director, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS),

Germany; Dr Nicolas Buchoud, Advisor to Dean, ADBI; and Mr Unmesh Sharad Wagh, Chairman, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority.

Ambassador Sanjay Kumar Verma, Chairman, RIS and Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS highlighted the important features of IMEC, and the relevance and timing of the conference. The conference was attended well with a good number of online participants.

IMEC is an initiative aimed at enhancing economic integration, trade efficiency, and regional connectivity. Its key priorities include establishing standardised operating procedures (SOPs) for logistics, investing in infrastructure, expanding digital networks, and strengthening financial systems. India's ₹ 1,800 crore

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Geographical Simulation Model (GSM) and the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)

On 20 March 2025, RIS organised an interactive session featuring Mr Ikumo Isono, Director of the Economic Geography Studies Group at IDE-JETRO, Tokyo. The session focused on the Geographical Simulation Model (GSM) and its application to the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC). The presentation offered participants an in-depth understanding of GSM's analytical framework, its application in policy planning, and the projected impact of IMEC.

Mr Isono introduced GSM as a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model based on spatial economics—a field integrating transport costs, economic geography, and regional trade flows. He explained how the model evaluates infrastructure development, tariff reforms, and trade facilitation through simulations that consider cross-border and intermodal transport dynamics.

The model uses detailed datasets that include multimodal transport information, regional GDP by sector, population distribution, and arable land availability. These are applied across economic sectors—agriculture, manufacturing (including electronics, textiles, food processing), and services (road, rail, air, sea). GSM distinguishes between monetary and non-monetary trade costs, accounting for transport delays, border inefficiencies, and cultural or political barriers.

Focusing on the IMEC, Mr Isono shared projections for 2030. The simulation suggests that India and Middle Eastern nations such



Mr Ikumo Isono during his presentation on GSM.

as the UAE (2.76 per cent) and Saudi Arabia (0.70 per cent) stand to benefit the most, while the EU is expected to experience modest gains (0.06 per cent). For India, the expected 1.98 per cent GDP increase reflects how corridor investments and policy reforms can translate into substantial economic benefits.

The presentation also explored how reducing non-tariff barriers (NTBs), including quotas and political risks, can significantly improve trade flow and efficiency. The model's flexibility in testing combinations of policy interventions—such as tariff reduction and physical infrastructure upgrades—enables targeted and regionally balanced planning.

In conclusion, Mr Isono remarked that GSM's ability to produce

region-specific forecasts allows it to guide corridor development while avoiding the exclusion of less-connected regions. He noted that emerging shifts in the global trade landscape—especially the US-China tensions—could further elevate the importance of corridors like IMEC that connect India, the Middle East, Europe, ASEAN, and Japan.

In conclusion, Mr Isono's presentation at the RIS session provided valuable insights into the application of the Geographical Simulation Model to the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor. His expertise in spatial economics and economic integration offers a robust analytical framework for policymakers to assess and enhance the impact of infrastructure and trade initiatives ■

Relevance of Sustainable Bioresource Management



Distinguished Panelists at the Roundtable on India-Indonesia Cooperation on Ayush and Jamu.

On 23 January 2025, RIS organised a significant roundtable discussion titled "India-Indonesia Cooperation on AYUSH and Jamu: Relevance of Sustainable Bioresource Management". The event brought together eminent scholars, policymakers, institutional representatives, and students to explore the shared cultural and scientific heritage of India and Indonesia in traditional medicine and its relevance to contemporary healthcare paradigms. The roundtable underscored the potential of this cooperation as a model for South-South collaboration rooted in indigenous knowledge, sustainability, and mutual benefit.

The event featured prominent voices in the field, including Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS; H.E. Mr Sandeep Chakravorty, Ambassador of India to the Republic of Indonesia; Ambassador Gurjit Singh, former Ambassador of India to Indonesia;

and Dr Manoj Nesari, Advisor (Ayurveda) to the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India. These speakers set the tone for a thoughtful and forward-looking dialogue that emphasised not only the cultural and scientific foundations of traditional medicine systems such as AYUSH and Jamu, but also their future roles in national and global health landscapes.

The roundtable fostered a rich exchange of ideas among a wide array of stakeholders, including representatives from the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), the Ministry of AYUSH, Universitas Padjadjaran in Bandung, the CVJ Centre for Synthetic Biology and Biomanufacturing in Kochi, the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM), the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KCSTE-JNTBGRI), the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at Universitas Udayana in

Denpasar, and the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (PCIMH). Their interventions highlighted the interdisciplinary potential of traditional medicine as a site of innovation and cooperation.

A core point of discussion was the asymmetry between India's robust and evolving AYUSH ecosystem and Indonesia's relatively nascent Jamu sector. Panelists acknowledged that while Jamu holds deep cultural resonance in Indonesian society, it remains largely unformalised within the country's public health architecture. The lack of systematic clinical trials and evidence-based evaluations has hindered Jamu's inclusion in Indonesia's primary healthcare services. In this context, the panel identified the need for a coherent conceptual framework to institutionalise Jamu. India's extensive regulatory and research infrastructure in AYUSH,

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Inaugural Lecture of the Maritime Knowledge Series

An Inspiring Heritage of Shipbuilding in India

RIS, in partnership with the India Habitat Centre (IHC), launched the Maritime Knowledge Lecture Series on 14 January 2025. Designed as a public-facing initiative, the series aims to foster maritime discourse, build awareness of India's naval heritage, and inspire youth to consider careers and research in maritime affairs. The inaugural lecture, *An Inspiring Heritage of Shipbuilding in India*, marked a fitting start, bringing together experts, naval historians, and over 60 in-person attendees, alongside a broader virtual audience through YouTube livestreams.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS, delivered the welcome address, framing India's shipbuilding legacy as not only a historical asset but also a strategic resource in the current era. He highlighted India's ancient role in shaping global trade routes and maritime connectivity, pointing to the relevance of this heritage in current geopolitical and economic contexts.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Sanjeev Ranjan, former Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, who traced India's maritime history to the Sindhu-Saraswati civilisation. He spoke of the dockyard at Lothal, among the oldest in the world, as evidence of India's early maritime innovation. Dr Ranjan discussed the Indus Valley Civilisation's maritime trade with Mesopotamia, Rome, and Southeast Asia, emphasising India's position in early global commerce.



Distinguished speakers at the inaugural lecture of the Maritime Knowledge Series.

Cmde Ajay Agarwal (Retd.) from the Maritime History Society focused on the technical sophistication of India's historical shipbuilding practices. He referenced the 12th-century treatise *Yukti Kalpataru* by Raja Bhoj, which classified wood types and detailed vessel designs—highlighting advanced indigenous understanding of material science. Cmde Agarwal noted the construction of Dhows, flexible and durable ships that enabled extended voyages across the Indian Ocean.

The lecture further explored the contributions of the Maratha Navy during the 17th and 18th centuries. Under leaders such as Shivaji and Kanhoji Angre, the Marathas constructed agile warships like the *Ghurab* and *Pal*, playing a crucial role in coastal defence. The dockyards at Vijaydurg and Alibaug were recognised for their innovative shipbuilding techniques, blending indigenous practices with European influences.

Cmde Vineet Tiwari (Retd.), former Principal Director at the Warship Design Bureau of the Indian Navy, provided an overview of India's post-independence achievements in naval shipbuilding. He highlighted the establishment of the Directorate of Naval Design (DND) in 1970 as a key institutional milestone. Indigenous shipbuilding successes—from the Godavari-class frigates and Delhi-class destroyers to the Shivalik-class stealth frigates—were presented as evidence of India's growing self-reliance. Cmde Tiwari noted the commissioning of *INS Vikrant* in 2022, India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, as a landmark in complex system development and indigenisation. He also stressed the importance of leveraging naval design capabilities for the expansion of India's commercial shipbuilding sector.

The discussion also addressed current challenges in the

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History, Archaeology and the Future of Maritime Talent in India

As part of the ongoing Maritime Knowledge Lecture Series, the Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity (CMEC) at RIS hosted its second lecture on 18 February 2025. The session, titled History, Archaeology and the Future of Maritime Talent in India, brought together scholars, students, and maritime professionals to explore the intersection of India's maritime past, present capabilities, and future potential in cultivating talent for a renewed maritime future.

The lecture was delivered by Professor Joy Sen, an eminent scholar in the field of infrastructure planning and architecture from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. The session was chaired by Dr Malini Shankar, Vice Chancellor of the Indian Maritime University (IMU), and moderated by Ambassador Sudhir T. Devare, Chairman of the Research Advisory Council at RIS. The event drew participation from a wide academic audience, including researchers from the University of Delhi and affiliated colleges such as Hindu College, Maitreyi College, and Jesus and Mary College. Faculty members from NCERT and other distinguished institutions were also in attendance, reflecting the broad interest in India's maritime legacy and policy discourse.

Professor Sen structured his lecture into three thematic sections: the History and Archaeology of Maritime Talent in India; the Marine Economy, Indian Knowledge Systems and Inclusive Infrastructure Planning; and finally, the Future of Maritime Talent in India. Each part offered a rich synthesis of historical insight and forward-looking strategies.



Professor Joy Sen delivering the lecture.

Beginning with India's maritime heritage, Professor Sen drew attention to the advanced navigational systems and knowledge traditions that shaped ancient Indian maritime practice. He referenced instruments such as astrolabes, indigenous astronomical methods, and maritime mapping tools, underscoring how India's early seafarers and coastal communities contributed to global trade and cultural exchange. This segment highlighted the need to reconnect with and preserve archaeological evidence of India's seafaring past as a source of both academic study and national pride.

In the second section, Professor Sen explored the intersection of India's traditional knowledge systems with modern-day marine infrastructure and logistics. He discussed the concept of inclusive infrastructure planning – grounded in sustainability, livelihood enhancement, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Emphasis was placed on the role of export processing zones, port-led development, and the need to build networks that support both

economic growth and ecological balance.

The concluding section turned towards the future, stressing the need for an integrative approach to maritime capacity building. Professor Sen called for systems thinking and the application of cybernetics and automation in maritime training and governance. He stressed the importance of maritime spatial planning and advocated for principles such as reuse, recovery, and recycling within coastal and oceanic ecosystems. His concluding remarks encouraged India to pursue a comprehensive strategy for maritime talent development – one that honours its historical prowess while embracing new-age technological competencies.

The lecture served as a compelling reminder of India's deep-rooted maritime heritage and the urgency of revitalising this domain through education, innovation, and policy. It advanced the series' core objective of creating a public platform for dialogue on India's maritime journey and its strategic future as a global maritime power. ■

Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) and the Developmental Partnerships



Distinguished speakers at the third lecture of Maritime Knowledge Series.

The third lecture in the Maritime Knowledge Series was held on 10 March 2025 on the theme Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and the Developmental Partnerships. The session brought together leading thinkers and practitioners in maritime strategy and policy to explore SAGAR's evolution as a strategic framework and its relevance in shaping India's regional and global maritime engagement.

The discussion was chaired by Vice Admiral S.N. Ghormade (Retd.), Former Vice Chief of the Naval Staff. The panel featured Dr Sriparna Pathak, Associate Professor at O.P. Jindal University, and Captain S.S. Parmar (Retd.), Distinguished Fellow at the Council for Strategic and Defence Research.

The speakers unanimously underlined the significance of

SAGAR as an overarching doctrine that promotes India's role as a stabilising force in the Indo-Pacific. Dr Pathak traced its implementation through multiple domains. She highlighted progress in maritime infrastructure expansion, improved regional shipping networks, and strengthened bilateral ties with countries such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Mauritius. She also drew attention to India's support for the blue economy – focusing on sustainable fisheries, ocean energy, and coastal livelihoods – and efforts in maritime disaster management, showcasing the integration of AI and grassroots innovation in realising SAGAR's objectives.

Captain Parmar emphasised the economic potential embedded in SAGAR's vision. He pointed to opportunities for India to become a key trade and investment partner,

especially for smaller island nations, and stressed the need for enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). He argued that SAGAR is not just a security policy but a driver of regional economic transformation and institutional cooperation.

In his concluding remarks, Vice Admiral Ghormade described SAGAR as a multidimensional platform that combines maritime security, technological innovation, economic partnerships, and environmental stewardship. He noted the timeliness of the session, occurring just before the Honourable Prime Minister of India's visit to Mauritius – where the SAGAR vision was first announced. The panellists agreed that India's leadership in the maritime domain will depend on its ability to harness trade, technology, and diplomacy in a synergistic manner. ■

Prospects of Blue Economy in India and Potential Avenues for Collaboration with the United States



Seminar on prospects of Blue Economy in progress.

RIS in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), hosted a seminar on Prospects of Blue Economy in India and Potential Avenues for Collaboration with the United States on 14 February 2025. The session convened a distinguished group of policymakers, academics, and international experts to explore the evolving landscape of India's blue economy and the broader scope for strategic collaboration with global partners, particularly the United States.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, opened the seminar with welcome remarks that set the tone for an interdisciplinary and globally-oriented discussion. He emphasised the role of biodiversity management as a foundational pillar of the blue economy and noted the institutional momentum provided by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and NITI Aayog in developing a comprehensive national roadmap. He also pointed to India's increasing budgetary

allocations toward the maritime sector, which signal strong policy intent and provide a platform for scaled-up investment and innovation.

The session was chaired by Dr M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, who underscored the complex challenges of sustainable ocean use in the face of climatic and non-climatic stressors. He stressed the need for enhanced international cooperation and diplomatic engagement, particularly in the areas of marine research and technology transfer. Dr Ravichandran called for stronger global alliances to ensure that blue economy development is both inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

Dr Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Director of the Marine Policy Center and Senior Advisor to the President on Ocean and Climate Policy in Washington, delivered the special address. He described the blue economy as a transformative opportunity, particularly for

developing nations, and highlighted the need for strong governance frameworks, regional partnerships, and long-term investment strategies. He argued that sustainable ocean development must be embedded within broader climate policy and international cooperation mechanisms.

In his intervention, Dr Balakrishna Pisupati, Head of the Environment Policy Unit at UNEP, emphasised the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface. He noted that translating marine science into actionable policy requires coherence across governance levels, as well as robust financial frameworks that can support implementation. He also highlighted the need to integrate ocean governance into national development planning and fiscal strategies.

Professor S.K. Mohanty, Distinguished Fellow at RIS, contributed to the discussion by raising a critical methodological issue: the absence of a universally

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Sustainable Agriculture and Agro-ecological Approaches in the Global South



DAKSHIN workshop series on agriculture.

The seventh edition of the DAKSHIN workshop series, and the third to focus on agriculture, convened on 22 January 2025 in an online format, bringing together experts, scholars, and practitioners to discuss the urgent need for sustainable agricultural practices and agro-ecological approaches in the Global South. Organised jointly by DAKSHIN and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), the workshop offered a platform for knowledge-sharing across geographies marked by both agricultural vulnerability and resilience.

In his opening remarks, Professor Gulshan Sachdeva, Chief Coordinator of DAKSHIN, framed the discussion around the shared agricultural challenges faced by countries in the Global South. He underlined the significance of cross-border collaboration, pointing out that many of the difficulties—ranging from climate-related stresses to market constraints—are

not confined to national boundaries. His call for cooperation was both practical and philosophical, rooted in the belief that sustainable agriculture must be grounded in collective learning and action.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS, further anchored the conversation by highlighting agriculture's centrality to food security and livelihoods in the Global South. He pointed to persistent structural barriers such as inadequate market access, weak quality control, and a dependence on chemical inputs, which continue to constrain the transition to more sustainable models. He made a compelling case for adopting agro-ecological approaches that are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

One of the key interventions came from Dr Gagnesh Sharma, Director of the National Centre

for Organic and Natural Farming under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Dr Sharma outlined the Indian government's ambitious push toward natural farming through the National Mission for Natural Farming. With a target of creating 15,000 natural farming clusters across 7.5 lakh hectares and involving one crore farmers over the next two years, the initiative seeks to integrate traditional knowledge with modern ecological science to improve soil health, enhance climate resilience, and reduce dependency on external inputs.

The workshop also highlighted region-specific challenges and solutions. Professor Ashwani Pareek, Executive Director of the BRIC-National Agri-Food and Biomanufacturing Institute and a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, detailed the impact of environmental stressors such as water scarcity and salinity in Punjab.

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Interaction on Alternative Development Paradigm



Brainstorming session on the Alternative Development Paradigm.

On 30 January 2025, RIS hosted a high-level brainstorming session on the Alternative Development Paradigm, bringing together leading thinkers and practitioners to deliberate on how development models in the Global South can be reimagined to reflect local contexts, ethical priorities, and environmental sustainability. The session was chaired by Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS, and featured insightful interventions from Mr Chandran Nair, Founder and CEO of the Global Institute for Tomorrow; Mr Jaydeep Biswas, Chief Policy and Partnership Officer of UNFPA; and Dr Sabyasachi Saha, Associate Professor at RIS. The dialogue was attended by RIS faculty members and professionals from a wide spectrum of disciplines.

In his opening remarks, Professor Chaturvedi argued that the Washington Consensus cannot serve as a universal development blueprint for countries in the Global South. He advocated for frameworks that are not only indigenised but also aligned with each country's ecological and cultural specificities.

Highlighting India's Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative as a homegrown alternative, he urged the Global South to craft development strategies that reduce carbon footprints while advancing inclusive growth.

Mr Chandran Nair delivered a strong critique of the neoclassical economic paradigm, contending that it has failed to generate genuine developmental outcomes for the Global South. He proposed bioregion-specific models rooted in local realities rather than externally imposed frameworks. He questioned the overreliance on foreign direct investment, cautioning that it can entrench economic dependence. Nair called for a holistic approach that considers cultural practices, social harmony, and indigenous knowledge in shaping development policy.

Building on these ideas, Mr Jaydeep Biswas highlighted the importance of institutions such as DAKSHIN in embedding traditional wisdom and local practices into broader development narratives. He argued for moving beyond GDP-centric evaluations, proposing

a more inclusive understanding of well-being that values intangible factors such as cultural identity, ecological stewardship, and community resilience. Drawing inspiration from Vedantic thought, he called for philosophical shifts in how we conceptualise progress and solidarity across the Global South.

Dr Sabyasachi Saha addressed the need to balance individual and collective rights in development frameworks. He pointed to India's distinctive contributions in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including initiatives such as Scientific Social Responsibility and Access, Equity, and Inclusion (AEI). These, he argued, offer contextually rooted approaches to ethical and socially responsive innovation that can serve as models for other developing nations.

The session reaffirmed that mainstream economic prescriptions often fall short in addressing the complexities of the Global South. It called for plural and localised frameworks that reflect not only economic aspirations but also ethical and environmental imperatives. ■

Advancing Universal Health Coverage: Leveraging Technology for Maternal Care and Vaccine Delivery



DAKSHIN workshop series on health.

On 19 February 2025, DAKSHIN at RIS convened its ninth workshop in the ongoing series dedicated to development dialogue across the Global South. Titled 'Advancing Universal Health Coverage: Leveraging Technology for Maternal Care and Vaccine Delivery', the virtual workshop brought together a broad spectrum of public health experts, policy practitioners, and researchers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The discussion centred on how emerging technologies – particularly digital tools and artificial intelligence – can strengthen maternal healthcare systems and optimise vaccine delivery, especially in resource-constrained settings.

The workshop was opened by Professor Gulshan Sachdeva, Chief Coordinator of DAKSHIN, who welcomed participants and facilitated the discussions.

The keynote speakers included some of India's most respected voices in public health. Dr Rakesh Kumar, Former Joint Secretary, RMNCHA+N, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India emphasised the importance of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and the role of technology in extending vaccine coverage across diverse populations. Dr Ajay Khera, Former Commissioner at the same Ministry and now Country Representative at EngenderHealth India, highlighted how AI and digital health platforms can bridge the gap between availability and access, enhance service quality, and make care more affordable. Meanwhile, Professor Rajib Dasgupta, Chairperson of the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health at Jawaharlal Nehru University, spoke on the innovation frontier, making a

compelling case for painless vaccine delivery techniques, such as the Bubble Gun and edible vaccines, as a means to boost immunisation uptake.

A truly global conversation unfolded as speakers from DAKSHIN partner institutions across the Global South shared experiences and innovations. Dr Kim Hekimian from Columbia University discussed Armenia's experience in improving caesarean delivery protocols through digital technologies and data visualisation. From Algeria, Professor Rachida Boukari underscored the critical role of digital platforms in ensuring transparency and accountability in vaccine delivery systems. Dr Titipol Phakdeewanich of Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand, presented highlights from the country's AI Strategy (2022-2027), particularly applications of AI in

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Development Cooperation: Perspectives from the Global South



Dignitaries at the seminar on Development Cooperation after USAID: Perspectives from the Global South.

On 28 February 2025, RIS hosted a webinar titled "Development Cooperation after USAID: Perspectives from the Global South", in collaboration with the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) and the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). The event brought together leading voices in global development, including Professor Li Xiaoyun (CAU), Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla (Former Foreign Secretary of India), Professor Sachin Chaturvedi (RIS), Dr Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (SAIIA), and Dr André de Mello e Souza (IPEA), with moderation by Dr Stephan Klingebiel (IDOS). The webinar attracted over 400 participants, reflecting broad interest in the future of aid and cooperation.

The discussion opened with a critical assessment of USAID's

central role in global development aid. While its contributions to health, infrastructure, and humanitarian response are well-documented, concerns were raised about the structural implications of scaling back or restructuring the agency. Such shifts could destabilise employment, disrupt health programmes, and weaken economic resilience in many Global South economies.

Speakers highlighted the urgent need to reassess aid dependency and called for a transition towards self-reliant development models. Emphasis was placed on enhancing domestic resource mobilisation, diversifying funding sources, and prioritising local economic empowerment. Particularly compelling was the consensus on the importance of demand-driven assistance—where recipient

countries exercise greater agency in shaping aid frameworks.

The discussion also stressed the value of South–South Cooperation (SSC) as an alternative model, one that encourages regional autonomy and reduces political conditionalities. Moreover, transparency and accountability emerged as essential pillars for future development frameworks. Panellists advocated for institutional reform, community engagement, and stronger multilateral mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness and impact of aid.

In conclusion, while acknowledging USAID's historical contributions, the webinar called for a paradigmatic shift in development cooperation—towards resilience, sovereignty, and mutual accountability in the Global South. ■

India-Vietnam Working for Global South



DAKSHIN, RIS at the International conference on India-Vietnam Working for Global South.

DAKSHIN, as a platform for development solutions curated in the Global South by agencies of the Global South, participated in this international conference on 19 March 2025 to discuss opportunities for India and Vietnam to work together for the Global South countries. DAKSHIN was represented by Mr Atul Kaushik, GDC Fellow, RIS. India's Ambassador to Vietnam Dr Sandeep Arya and the Director General of ISAWAAS, Dr Nguyen Xuan Trung set the stage for the proceedings by exhorting the participants to leverage India's role in creating a platform for South-South Cooperation (SSC) as a driving force for sustainable development, with Vietnam contributing good practices on efficiency and India on Digital Public Infrastructure, technology and climate change abatement.

Topics covered include the significance of the Global South in

the new context, role of India and Vietnam to promote Global South interests, and the opportunities, challenges, potential, and solutions of India-Vietnam cooperation for the Global South development. Speakers from India included representatives from the International Solar Alliance, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, DAKSHIN at RIS, Nalanda University, O. P. Jindal University, and the Observer Research Foundation. Vietnam was represented by ISAWAAS, the Vietnam Centre of Advanced Study of India (VCASI), the Vietnam Academy of Agriculture Sciences (VAAS), and the Hanoi National University.

Eleven different areas of potential cooperation between India and Vietnam were identified. The day long deliberations included several suggestions from the floor from experts to narrow them down to specific issues and areas for India

and Vietnam to work for the broader interests of the Global South.

Sustainable and productive agricultural practices including in rice, coffee, potato and bamboo leading to improved entrepreneurship, and bringing digital public infrastructure to use in the Global South could be good starting points.

With like interests and similar development pathways, countries of the Global South are not lacking in opportunities and options to work together. They can supplement North-South cooperation through South-South cooperation.

Experience was shared about how such South-South cooperation between India and Vietnam could also benefit from the triangular cooperation with technology and financial support from developed countries like Japan and Germany. ■

Malaysia's Vision and Priorities as the Current Chair of ASEAN



Interaction with Ambassador Raja Dato' Nushirwan Zainal Abidin, Director General of Malaysia's National Security Council.

On 6 January 2025, Ambassador Raja Dato' Nushirwan Zainal Abidin, Director General of Malaysia's National Security Council, visited RIS to engage in an in-depth exchange on Malaysia's vision and priorities as the current Chair of ASEAN. The interaction was chaired by Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS, and brought together a wide array of scholars, subject experts, and RIS faculty members for a substantive dialogue on regional cooperation and connectivity in Southeast Asia.

Ambassador Nushirwan outlined Malaysia's theme for its ASEAN Chairmanship – Inclusivity and Sustainability – and discussed key priorities, including addressing the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, reinforcing ASEAN centrality, and advocating peaceful resolutions to disputes in the South China Sea. He highlighted Malaysia's emphasis on localisation and drew attention to India's role as a vital and dynamic partner in the region. Reflecting on the region's shared

civilisational heritage, he referenced Rabindranath Tagore's travels to Southeast Asia and iconic sites such as Borobudur and Angkor Wat as symbols of enduring cultural ties.

In his remarks, Professor Chaturvedi underlined the importance of India's regional initiatives, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and stressed the relevance of digitalisation, Fintech, and sustainability as key drivers of regional growth. Ambassador Nushirwan echoed these views, highlighting the need for resilient supply chains, enhanced support for CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam), and stronger bilateral cooperation between Malaysia and India, while also recognising ASEAN's continued engagement with China.

The discussion was enriched by thoughtful contributions from the panellists. Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia advocated for a peaceful and balanced approach to resolving tensions in the South China Sea.

Captain Sarabjit Parmar offered a security perspective on the Taiwan Strait, identifying it as a crucial flashpoint. Professor Chintamani Mahapatra raised critical questions regarding the underwhelming trajectory of India-Malaysia relations in recent years. Professor Gulshan Sachdeva added that a stronger and more cohesive Global South would be essential in shaping a more equitable international order.

The session concluded with a shared understanding that enhancing defence and security ties between India and Malaysia, deepening connectivity, and reinforcing supply chain resilience are essential steps towards ensuring peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. The dialogue highlighted both the promise and the responsibility that lie in nurturing India-ASEAN relations, particularly at a time of geopolitical uncertainty and global realignments. ■

India–Myanmar Economic Relations



Seminar on India–Myanmar Economic Relations.

On 25 February 2025, RIS hosted an insightful session on India–Myanmar Economic Relations, featuring a presentation by Dr Thuta Aung, DBA (Durham) and Commission Member of the Myanmar Competition Commission. Chaired by Professor S.K. Mohanty, Distinguished Fellow at RIS, the session brought together experts and academics to deliberate on strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.

Dr Aung underscored Myanmar's strategic significance within BIMSTEC and emphasised the country's untapped potential in critical sectors, notably rare earth minerals. Myanmar's Kachin State is a significant global source of heavy rare earth elements (HREEs), which are crucial for technologies like electric vehicles and wind turbines. However, the region's mining activities have been disrupted due to control by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an ethnic militia seeking leverage against China's influence. This disruption has led

to a substantial decrease in China's imports of rare earth oxides from Myanmar, dropping by 89% in February 2025 compared to the previous year.

Dr Aung proposed that India could leverage this opportunity through targeted investments, particularly in rare earth materials. The session also addressed the importance of expanding trade in agricultural commodities and promoting collaborative initiatives in MSME development and capacity-building in education.

He proposed that India could leverage this opportunity through targeted investments, particularly in rare earth materials and agri-based sectors such as dairy. Dr Aung also pointed out that India's expertise in dairy production and processing could be leveraged to enhance Myanmar's capabilities, leading to mutual benefits. Additionally, expanding trade in agricultural commodities and promoting collaborative initiatives in MSME development and educational

capacity-building were identified as key areas for strengthening bilateral ties.

The session also addressed the importance of expanding trade in agricultural commodities and promoting collaborative initiatives in MSME development and capacity-building in education.

A recurring theme in the discussion was the enhancement of people-to-people connectivity, which was seen as foundational to deepening economic relations. Participants identified mutual complementarities in sectors like resource management, agriculture, and services, suggesting that a strategic partnership could foster inclusive regional growth.

The session concluded with reflections on broader regional dynamics, where India–Myanmar cooperation was positioned as central to stability and prosperity in the Bay of Bengal region. The dialogue highlighted the need for sustained engagement and policy alignment to realise shared development goals. ■

Special Course for Diplomats from Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia

On 18 February 2025, RIS had the privilege of hosting a Special Course for Diplomats from Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, designed to foster deeper understanding and cooperation between India and the Gulf countries. The course was inaugurated by Ambassador Sanjay Kumar Verma, Chairperson of RIS, with welcome remarks delivered by Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of RIS.

The programme comprised an intensive series of lectures and interactive sessions delivered by RIS faculty, covering a diverse range

of subjects. These included India-GCC trade dynamics, regional connectivity strategies, digital public infrastructure, traditional medicine systems, and the role of DAKSHIN in promoting South-South Cooperation. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and India's global development partnerships were also key themes, demonstrating India's growing role in shaping inclusive international frameworks.

This initiative underscored the importance of diplomatic engagement and intellectual

exchange in shaping robust bilateral and multilateral relationships. Participants gained valuable insights into India's policy landscape, economic priorities, and strategic interests across key sectors.

The programme reaffirmed the commitment to building stronger India-GCC ties through shared knowledge, people-to-people diplomacy, and institutional cooperation. It also reflected RIS's broader mandate to contribute to informed global dialogue through capacity-building and policy research. ■



Participants at a Special Course for Diplomats, RIS.

Prospects of Blue Economy in India and Potential Avenues for Collaboration with the United States

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accepted classification or metric for measuring the blue economy. While countries such as the United States, China, and those within the OECD have begun to estimate the scale of their maritime economies, a lack of standardised indicators continues

to hinder comparative analysis and coordinated global action.

The seminar concluded with an open discussion, during which participants reflected on the key themes of the session—namely, the importance of strategic partnerships, integrated policy frameworks, and

dedicated financial resources. The consensus underscored the role of global cooperation, knowledge exchange, and institution-building in realising the full potential of the blue economy for sustainable development. ■

Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare: Learning Together Towards Responsible AI

As part of the 10th National Bioethics Conference, a dedicated pre-conference training and peer engagement workshop titled *Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare: Learning Together Towards Responsible AI* was held at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) during 28-29 January 2025. Organised collaboratively by the Forum for Medical Ethics Society (FMES), the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME), and Christian Medical College, Vellore (CMC Vellore), the workshop served as an important platform to engage with the complexities of integrating AI into the healthcare ecosystem in India. RIS was represented at the workshop by Dr Krishna Ravi Srinivas, who has been closely engaged with issues

of AI governance and policy.

Spanning two days, the workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, including representatives from academia, start-ups and industry, civil society organisations, think tanks, and practising medical professionals. Its comprehensive approach allowed for a nuanced exploration of both the scientific and technical dimensions of AI in healthcare, as well as the broader ethical, regulatory, and governance challenges it presents.

One of the major strengths of the workshop was its interdisciplinary orientation. Sessions addressed regulatory gaps, questions around data protection and governance, and the ethical tensions arising from the deployment of AI technologies

in clinical and public health contexts. Dr Krishna Ravi Srinivas from RIS contributed to these discussions by highlighting the growing disjuncture between rapid technological innovation and the comparatively slow pace of regulatory development across jurisdictions. He emphasised that effective governance of AI in healthcare must be anticipatory, inclusive, and adaptive, especially given the risks of algorithmic bias, data privacy concerns, and unequal access to AI-driven health services.

The event underscored the need for sustained collaboration between stakeholders in the AI and healthcare domains, including policymakers, technologists, healthcare providers, and ethicists. ■

Advancing Universal Health Coverage: Leveraging Technology for Maternal Care and Vaccine Delivery

Continued from page 10

diagnostic imaging, robotic surgery, and immersive simulation training in medicine.

Mrs Ximena Coronado from Bolivia's INESAD brought attention to the role of public trust in vaccine acceptance, pointing to India's experience in community-based engagement as a model. In a similar vein, Dr Rian'aina Razafimandimby Rabarihoela from Madagascar advocated for oral and needle-free vaccine methods as effective tools to overcome deep-seated hesitancy in rural communities.

Ms Débora Itriago from the Central America Academy in Costa Rica spoke about the importance of inclusive digital platforms that

support indigenous languages and respect local knowledge systems, while also calling for stronger data security standards. From Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Adesh Sirjusingh, Director of Women's Health, reflected on how digital monitoring systems are enabling progress toward the 2030 SDG targets in maternal and child health. She was joined by Ms Grace Sookchand, who shared practical insights on implementing the country's Electronic Immunisation Registry to improve tracking, follow-ups, and workforce capacity.

The workshop closed with an interactive session moderated by Dr Monika Kochar, Health Advisor

at DAKSHIN. Responding to participant queries, she addressed how traditional healthcare wisdom can meaningfully intersect with digital innovations to create more adaptive and resilient health systems.

The deliberations throughout the session reflected a shared sense of urgency, but also optimism. With thoughtful integration of digital technologies, standardised health data practices, and inclusive policy design, the Global South has the tools – and increasingly, the collective vision – to advance the cause of universal health coverage in a just, sustainable, and equitable manner. ■

Rationalisation of the Cargo Freight Charges – A Strategic Outlook for India



Mr Krishnan Subramaniam, International Vice Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS), London, with RIS Faculty members.

As part of its CEO Speaks initiative, RIS hosted Mr Krishnan Subramaniam, International Vice Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS), London, for a lecture on Rationalisation of Cargo Freight Charges – A Strategic Outlook for India on 24 March 2025. The session

was chaired by Shri Rajeev Kher, Distinguished Fellow at RIS, and attended by faculty and invited experts in logistics and trade.

Mr Subramaniam presented a detailed analysis of freight structures across container, dry, liquid, and bulk cargo categories. He unpacked cost elements from both shore-

side and shipping-side operations, highlighting inefficiencies caused by multiple surcharges, limited transparency, and fragmented stakeholder ecosystems.

The speaker stressed the need to bring greater coherence to the freight cost landscape through stakeholder engagement, policy reform, and

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Inaugural Lecture of the Maritime Knowledge Series

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shipbuilding industry, including high capital costs, insufficient funding, and limited infrastructure. The panel called for policy reforms to encourage investment, strengthen public-private partnerships, and expand research and development. There was strong consensus on the need for India's shipbuilding sector to align with global environmental standards, with opportunities identified in the emerging green shipping segment.

The lecture underlined the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean Region and the broader Indo-Pacific, through which 60 per cent of global maritime trade flows. With initiatives like Sagarmala and the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, India is actively working to revitalise its maritime infrastructure. These efforts aim to foster a robust ecosystem for shipbuilding, logistics, and trade that supports national growth

objectives and regional connectivity.

The event concluded with a strong call to reclaim India's maritime primacy. The talks not only celebrated the country's shipbuilding heritage but also laid out a vision for future leadership in innovation, sustainability, and global maritime engagement. The lecture series promises to serve as a meaningful platform for maritime scholarship, industry engagement, and national strategy. ■



Distinguished panelists at IMEC conference.

investment in power transmission and broadband expansion underscores its commitment to IMEC's development.

Beyond trade, IMEC fosters cultural exchange, strengthens Global Value Chains (GVCs), and enhances economic resilience. Smart logistics, fintech, and cybersecurity are critical for its seamless operation, while public-private partnerships (PPPs) and regional collaboration will drive sustainable growth. By democratising technology, IMEC can bridge gaps between the Global South and North, ensuring inclusive development.

As a multifaceted economic corridor, IMEC integrates infrastructure, energy, digital connectivity, and industrialisation. Strategic placement of infrastructure is essential to prevent regional disparities and maximise benefits. Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) -Geographical Simulation Model (GSM) predict significant economic gains for the UAE, India, Saudi Arabia, and the EU. Multimodal logistics could improve efficiency by 14-15 per cent, while green hydrogen integration and digital trade platforms like MAITRI will enhance connectivity as a part of India- UAE Framework Agreement. Institutional

frameworks similar to Gati Shakti can streamline coordination among stakeholders. Europe sees IMEC as a crucial element of its de-risking strategy, providing direct access to Middle Eastern hydrocarbons and complementing the EU's Global Gateway Initiative.

Despite geopolitical and financial challenges, IMEC offers promising trade routes, attracting investment in ports, railways, and infrastructure. Addressing asymmetry in benefits and costs, harmonising regulations, adopting a phased implementation approach, and engaging the private sector early will be critical for success. Diplomatic outreach to non-signatories like Egypt and Turkey will further strengthen its long-term viability.

IMEC also plays a strategic role in trade, investment, energy security, and geopolitical alignment. Key hubs such as Kandla, JNPA, Marseilles, and Salalah Port, coupled with AI-driven logistics via MAITRI, will facilitate trade flows. Geopolitically, the U.S. aims to counter China, the EU seeks to diversify from Russian energy dependence, the Middle East looks for new markets, and India strengthens its global trade presence.

For India, energy independence is crucial. Instead of relying on expensive Western imports, India must develop its own energy technologies by leveraging its strong engineering capabilities and skilled workforce. A diversified energy mix and enhanced storage infrastructure are essential for long-term reliability. Expanding energy partnerships beyond the Middle East to ASEAN, Europe, Australia, and Japan will further strengthen India's position. IMEC requires significant investments in grid infrastructure and energy storage, and collaboration with Europe on green technology and financing could be instrumental. Lessons from global energy exchange models will help shape effective strategies for implementation. Key questions remain on the viability of green hydrogen, the feasibility of India-Middle East energy connectivity, and IMEC's attractiveness to investors.

Furthermore, IMEC represents a long-term process of regional connectivity, emphasising scientific collaboration, sustainability, and digital transformation. Financial backing will be key, with India leveraging alliances such as I2U2 and Indo-Arabic partnerships while integrating neighbouring countries

like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Private sector reluctance toward infrastructure investment, driven by risks at various stages, must be mitigated through blended finance, sovereign funds, and PPP models. Drawing insights from the Global Gateway Initiative, IMEC can establish an Infrastructure Fund and

engage Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to ensure sustainable financing.

In conclusion, IMEC is not just an infrastructure project but a dynamic framework for economic transformation. By integrating digital connectivity, energy networks, port efficiency, and education initiatives,

it redefines trade agreements and fosters regional cooperation and go beyond the traditional trade routes. More than a transport route, IMEC serves as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth, strengthening global connectivity while reducing inequalities. ■

Sustainable Agriculture and Agro-ecological Approaches in the Global South

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He advocated for a combination of soil and water resource management, stress-tolerant crops, and digital tools to advance precision farming. His emphasis on digital agriculture resonated with broader conversations about how technological integration can transform farming systems without compromising ecological balance.

Professor Usha Mina, also from Jawaharlal Nehru University, introduced permaculture as an agro-ecological model that combines sustainability with community empowerment. She stressed the need for national strategies that bridge scientific innovation with indigenous knowledge. Her remarks foregrounded the role of social movements, food sovereignty, and grassroots participation in shaping resilient agricultural systems.

From the high-altitude terrains of Ladakh, Dr Jigmet Yangchan of the University of Ladakh shared tangible innovations such as solar-powered water harvesting, vermicomposting, trench farming, and micro-irrigation. These practices, she argued, are vital for transforming fragile and barren landscapes into productive ecosystems, thereby enhancing local food security and environmental sustainability.

Voices from beyond South Asia enriched the dialogue further. Mr Salim Said Salim, Executive Director of the Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis (SIDRA), highlighted governance

gaps, climate challenges, and technological limitations in Somalia, while also pointing to opportunities in irrigation, climate adaptation, and access to innovation. Mr Osman Mohamed Ali, also from SIDRA, emphasised the transformative potential of drought-resistant crops and called for systemic policy reforms to strengthen infrastructure, research, and farmer capacity.

Dr Federico Bert, leading the programme on the Digitalisation of Agri-Food Systems at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in St. Lucia, brought insights from Latin America. He spotlighted no-tillage practices in Argentina and the use of mobile apps and digital platforms to reduce pesticide use, enhance water efficiency, and improve yields. His contribution underscored the global relevance of digital technologies in supporting sustainable agriculture. From West Africa, Mr Andrew Laval of the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR), Sierra Leone, traced the historical trajectory of agricultural decline in the country. Once a net exporter of rice, Sierra Leone now imports much of its staple food. He attributed this shift to misguided policy choices and underinvestment in rural livelihoods, stressing the urgency of revitalising agriculture as a means of restoring food sovereignty.

The workshop also benefited from South Asian perspectives. Dr S.H. Nuwan P. De Silva of the University

of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, presented traditional systems like Ellanga and Kandyan home gardens as models of biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use. These, he argued, are not relics but relevant strategies that align with modern ecological thinking. He also noted emerging efforts in Sri Lanka to promote intercropping, green manure, and digital agriculture to improve sustainability outcomes.

From the Caribbean, Mr Julio Jimenez Peña of the Dominican Republic's National Committee of International Relations Scholars (CONERI) shared experiences from agro-ecological interventions in multiple communities affected by the coffee crisis. The initiatives, involving family gardens and soil conservation practices, aim to restore both food security and degraded ecosystems – demonstrating how local action can address global problems.

The workshop concluded with a vibrant interactive session where participants engaged the panelists with questions and reflections. Dr S. S. Reddy, Adviser (Agriculture), DAKSHIN at RIS, offered closing comments that synthesised the diverse insights presented over the course of the session. He reaffirmed the workshop's relevance to broader developmental goals and the importance of knowledge-sharing platforms in building a more sustainable and inclusive agricultural future.

In his concluding remarks, Professor Sachdeva thanked the participants for their thoughtful contributions and reaffirmed DAKSHIN's commitment to supporting research

and collaboration in sustainable agriculture. He emphasised that while challenges remain, the collective intelligence and commitment demonstrated during

the workshop offer a hopeful pathway toward agro-ecological resilience in the Global South. ■

Relevance of Sustainable Bioresource Management

Continued from page..3

particularly through institutions like PCIMH, could provide valuable support to Indonesia in this foundational phase. Capacity-building collaborations, including regulatory harmonisation and standards development, were recommended as a promising avenue.

Further, the importance of academic collaboration through student and researcher exchange programmes was emphasised. Such initiatives would not only enrich mutual understanding of traditional medicine practices but also create a new generation of scholars and practitioners committed to evidence-based integration of indigenous systems in modern healthcare.

The management of medicinal plant resources emerged as a pressing common concern. Both India and Indonesia face challenges related to the sustainable harvesting and conservation of biodiversity critical to their traditional medicine systems. Participants proposed joint research and development initiatives focusing on digital

sequencing information (DSI), tissue culture, and the application of synthetic biology to ensure the sustainability and scalability of medicinal plant supply chains. Given the overlapping flora between the two countries, this area of cooperation could offer both ecological and commercial dividends.

From an economic perspective, the AYUSH industry in India—estimated by RIS to be worth approximately USD 23.3 billion in 2022—stands to benefit from Indonesia's rich biological resource base. Panelists noted that increased trade in medicinal plants and raw materials could foster a mutually beneficial bioeconomy, while also promoting ethical sourcing and fair trade practices. Such trade relations would require supportive regulatory and certification mechanisms, which could be jointly developed.

Looking ahead, participants advocated for institutional mechanisms to consolidate this growing partnership. It was suggested that RIS undertake

dedicated studies to examine the scope of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in traditional medicine. The DAKSHIN platform, envisioned as a Global South Centre of Excellence, could play a critical role in this endeavour by undertaking comparative research on traditional medical systems across selected countries in the Global South. Furthermore, the establishment of an India-Indonesia Fund was proposed to serve as a financial and institutional vehicle to support joint initiatives, capacity building, and collaborative research in the field.

In conclusion, the roundtable served as a vital step toward reimagining traditional medicine not as a relic of the past, but as a dynamic and evolving contributor to sustainable healthcare futures. By drawing on shared cultural knowledge and leveraging complementarities in institutional strengths, India and Indonesia have the opportunity to shape a new model of cooperation rooted in wellness, biodiversity, and South-South solidarity.



Distinguished Panelists at the Roundtable on India-Indonesia Cooperation on Ayush and Jammu.

Professor Sachin Chaturvedi

Director General

- Delivered a Lecture on 'India's Role in Shaping the New Economic Order' at the IBS Eminent Leadership Series organised by ICFAI Business School on 7 January 2025, Gurgaon.
- Moderated the Panel Discussion on 'Global Partnership for Green Ambitions: Technology, Trade and Resources' on the occasion of the Bharat Climate Forum 2025 on 'Scaling Clean Tech Manufacturing for a Net-Zero and Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat' organised jointly by CIEU, Dalberg and Bharat Climate Forum on 10 January 2025, New Delhi.
- Delivered the Foundation Day Lecture on 'Reimagining Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators: Towards Development Agenda for Viksit Bharat at 2047' at the International Conference on Aligning Science-Technology-Innovation Indicators for Effective G&D Governance (STliG-2025) on the occasion of the 4th Foundation Day of CSIR-NIScPR on 14 January 2025, New Delhi.
- Made a presentation on 'Viksit Bharat' at the BLITZ India Conclave on "Viksit Bharat @ 2047" and Launch of BLITZ India Business Weekly organised by BLITZ on 18 January 2025, Mumbai.
- Addressed the participants in the Webinar on 'IPPN Knowledge Café: How Can Integrated Policies Deliver the UN Common Approaches to Biodiversity and Pollution' organised by

UNDP and Integrated Policy Practitioners' Network (IPPN) on 22 Jan 2025.

- Made a presentation on 'Economic Security as an Element of National Security: Challenges and Opportunities for India', at the 48th Higher Air Command Course (HACC) organised by the College of Air Warfare on 24 January 2025, Secunderabad.
- Panelist in the sessions on 'Multilateralism and Geopolitics', and 'Technology and Digital Governance' at the Roundtable Discussion with Bruegel Scholars organised by NITI Aayog on 3 February 2025, New Delhi.
- Moderated the Panel on 'Leveraging Diplomacy to Secure India's Global Partnerships and Resource Demands in Priority Sectors' at the Conclave on "Towards Viksit Bharat@2047: Strengthening Economy, National Security, Global Partnerships and Law organized by NITI Aayog on 6 February 2025, New Delhi.
- Participated in the themed discussions on the 'Role of the Global South in Development Cooperation' organised during the Global South and Development Cooperation Programm organised by China Agriculture University on 10 February 2025, Yunnan, China.
- Participated in the NeST and IDOS discussions on the role of G20/T20 in development cooperation' organised during the Global South and Development Cooperation Programm on 11 February 2025, Yunnan, China.

- Key Speaker at Two-day brainstorming session on the "India Centric approach required in the S&T R&D ecosystem in the country" based on an India Centric Vision Organized by Vijnana Bharati, along with IIT, Gandhi Nagar.
- Made a presentation on 'Mission LiFE- Promoting Sustainable Lifestyle' at the Global Summit: Faith of Kumbh and Climate Change organized by the Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of Uttar Pradesh on February 16, 2025, Prayagraj.
- Panelist in the session on 'Act East Act Fast Act First' at the Advantage Assam 2.0 – Investment & Infrastructure Summit organised by the Department of Sports & Youth Welfare, Government of Assam, 25 February 2025, Guwahati.
- Delivered the Inaugural Lecture on 'Idea of Economic Cooperation, Security and Global South', at the SAU Thought Café – A South Asian University Lecture Series on 4 March 2025, New Delhi.
- Made a presentation on 'Trade Policy in Transition Times', at the Panel Discussion on 'The Geopolitics of Technology, Trade and Tariffs', organized by The India Foundation on 17 March 2025, New Delhi.
- Made a presentation on 'Development Partnership and India's Soft Power', at the Seminar on 'India's Rising Soft Power: Strategic Dimensions and Global Outreach' organised by Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bihar on 20 March 2025, New Delhi.

Professor S. K. Mohanty

- Participated in the review meeting organised by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) regarding for discussion on trade statistic and made a presentation on Trade Data Gaps, New Delhi on 2 January 2025.
- Participated in the discussion meeting - Retreat for officials of Commercial Wings of Indian Missions at 20 identified Countries of significance to enhance India's export potential organised by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi on 6 January 2025.
- Participated in the review meeting organised by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) regarding for discussion on trade statistic, New Delhi on 10 January 2025.
- Participated in the National Seminar on Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Multidimensional Perspectives organised by UGC Centre for Maritime Studies, Pondicherry University in collaboration with Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi & Indian Council of Social Science Research and made a presentation on Towards Mapping Untapped Economic Opportunities in

the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Also Presented a paper on Economic Feasibility of the Andaman and Niocobar Islands as a Trade Hub of India, Pondicherry on 29-30 January 2025.

- Participated and discussed in the first Comprehensive Ayush Database Committee meeting organised by Ministry of Ayush, New Delhi on 25 February 2025.
- Participated as a Guest of honor in the National Conference on India and IORA: Pathways Ahead organised by International Centre for Indo-Pacific (ICIPS), Kurukshetra University in collaboration with ICWA and presentation on the Key Issues in Blue Economy in IORA, Kurukshetra, Haryana on 27 February 2025.
- Participated as a Lead Speaker in the Roundtable Discussion on 'Unleashing the Blue Economy Potential in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR): Way Forward for the IORA' and made a presentation on Harnessing the Blue Economy in IORA: Growth and Sustainability organised by Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi on 25 March 2025.

Dr Pankaj Vashisht

Associate Professor

- Participated as a lead speaker in webinar on President Prabowo Subianto's visit to India: 'New Chapter in India-Indonesia Relations, Organised by Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Kolkata, 11 February 2025.
- Appointed visiting faculty of the School of International Relations and Peace Studies at Nalanda University.
- Made a presentation on India-Nepal Economic Relations at close door roundtable on Bharat-Nepal Relations: Economic Development, Trade and Commerce, jointly organised by RIS and NeNAP on 10 March 2025.

Dr P K Anand

Visiting Fellow

- Attended the National Workshop on Fast-Tracking and Reporting of Progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), under the State Support Mission initiative of NITI Aayog', held on 20th February 2025 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Rationalisation of the Cargo Freight Charges

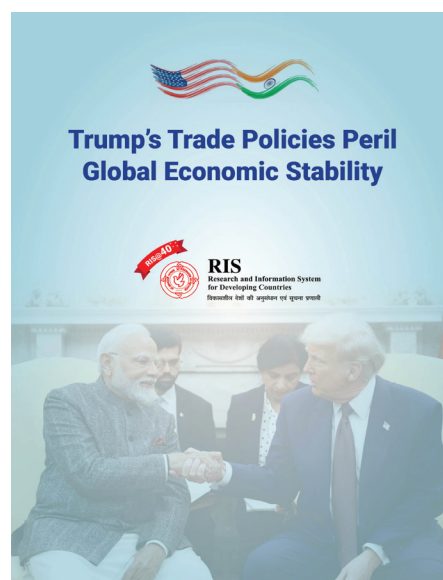
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digital innovation. He discussed the transformative potential of infrastructure development, digitisation of documentation, and the use of AI and data analytics to optimise cargo flows and pricing mechanisms.

Importantly, Mr Subramaniam presented a breakdown of 41 separate cost categories that contribute to freight charges and identified actionable areas

for regulatory rationalisation. He argued for better management of Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs), improved facilitation measures, transparent operations, and the deployment of technology-based platforms to streamline operations. Finance and insurance were also identified as persistent bottlenecks, requiring innovative financial instruments and risk-sharing frameworks.

The talk provided a strategic overview of India's freight ecosystem, noting that the country's freight bill stands close to USD 100 billion—a figure that necessitates urgent and sustained intervention. The session underscored the relevance of the subject for policymakers, regulators, and researchers aiming to improve trade competitiveness and reduce logistics costs. ■



REPORTS

- *Trump's Trade Policies Peril Global Economic Stability*, RIS, New Delhi, 2025.
- *India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) : Strategic Choices and Way Forward*, RIS, New Delhi, 2025.

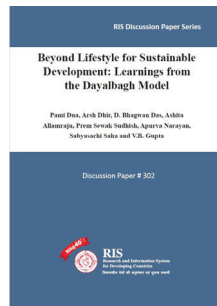
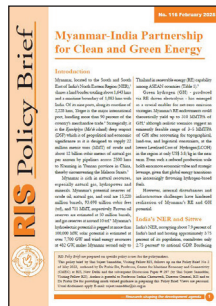
- *Navigating a World in Transition: Agenda for ASEAN-India Cooperation*, RIS-AIC, New Delhi, 2025.
- *MSME Digitalisation in India: Current Status and Challenges*, RIS, New Delhi, 2025.

JOURNALS

Development Cooperation Review
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RIS POLICY BRIEFS

- #116: *Myanmar-India Partnership for Clean and Green Energy* by Sujeet Samaddar
- #115: *Traditional Medicine in South Africa: Prospects for Ayush* by Namrata Pathak and Sanket Chavan
- #114: *Culture for Regional Cohesion and Global Engagement: The Case of ASEAN* by Sampa Kundu



RIS DISCUSSION PAPERS

#302: *Beyond Lifestyle for Sustainable Development: Learnings from the Dayalbagh Model* by Pami Dua, Arsh Dhir, D. Bhagwan Das, Ashita Allamraju, Prem Sewak Sudhish, Apurva Narayan, Sabyasachi Saha and V.B. Gupta

#301: *Global South Should Aim at a Comprehensive Package for Addressing Illicit Financial Flows* by Nilimesh Baruah

AIC COMMENTARIES

- #55: *Unlocking the Potential of ASEAN-India Regional Value Chain (RVC) 4.0* by Dr Witada Anukoonwattaka
- #54: *Towards a Resilient Partnership: ASEAN and India in a Transforming Global Landscape* by Dr Kao Kim Hourn

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- Chaturvedi, Sachin. 2025. 'How India can do business with Trump's America'. *Indian Express*. 23 January.
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- Chaturvedi, Sachin. and Kumar, Amit 2025. "Responsible AI Growth with Safety: Exploring Global and National Policy Discourse". *Journal of Information and Knowledge*. 61(5), pp. 231-237.
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