



VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

**73rd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats
(21 September - 02 October 2026)**



FROM DEAN'S DESK

Dear Readers, Dear Friends,

After the busiest month of August, September was the month of focusing on new initiatives and planning for SSIFS. The Digital Learning Lab that was established at SSIFS with the help of Capacity Building Commission (CBC) is now up and running with an average of one video lecture per week being created with our esteemed visiting faculty. These virtual learning material would be used both in our digital learning vertical at SSIFS as well as at the Mission Karmayogi iGot platform.



This initiative would help the Institute to create a pedagogical model that is increasingly experiential, where we are shifting from knowledge to wisdom-based on-site sessions, with background material available online.

Our website has been given a facelift with an upgrade in design and presentation. This would make information flow smoother and more efficient.

From 21st September, we started a two-week-long program- the 73rd edition of the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD), which is the flagship program of the Institute since its inception in 1992. This year, we have a diverse group of 36 diplomats from 33 countries, with countries as diverse as New Zealand, Mexico, Bahrain, Germany, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, and Namibia represented. Quite naturally, to curate a program for such a diverse group, we needed themes and ideas that are cross-cutting and relevant to the whole planet rather than a few specific regions. One of the key themes in this program that we included was the table-top exercises on complexity analysis of the world that we live in. This allows a holistic attitude to develop among the participants while working together as a network in trying to address problems that are likely to be faced by the diplomats in the near future.

A visit to the Taj Mahal on the full-moon day on 26th September, followed by a day at Gwalior to observe the history and connections of India with the rest of the world, was organised, with the clear idea that understanding India requires moving out of Delhi too. Taj Mahal visit was very enjoyable, with light drizzles making the evening cooler. Visit to Scindia Palace & Scindia Public School showcased both past & future of India in one day. The light & sound show at Gwalior Fort was a perfect end to a well-spent Sunday for the group.

We also received various delegations for a short visit to SSIFS during the month, the details of which you would find inside the newsletter.

Next month in October, we have multiple programs coming up, for Egyptian diplomats, for diplomats from the League of Arab States and a Mid-Career Training Program for the IFS Offices of the 2011 batch, and much more.

As we enter the festival months of autumn, we extend best wishes to our readers!



Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
30 September 2026

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

73rd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats

(21 September - 02 October 2026)

The 73rd edition of the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats was held at SSIFS from 21 Sep – 02 Oct 2026. The two-week training programme was attended by 36 mid-career diplomats from 33 Global South & Global North countries. Over two weeks, the program delivered expert-led knowledge sessions, interactive tabletop and simulation exercises, institutional visits, and immersive cultural field study tours across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and New Delhi.



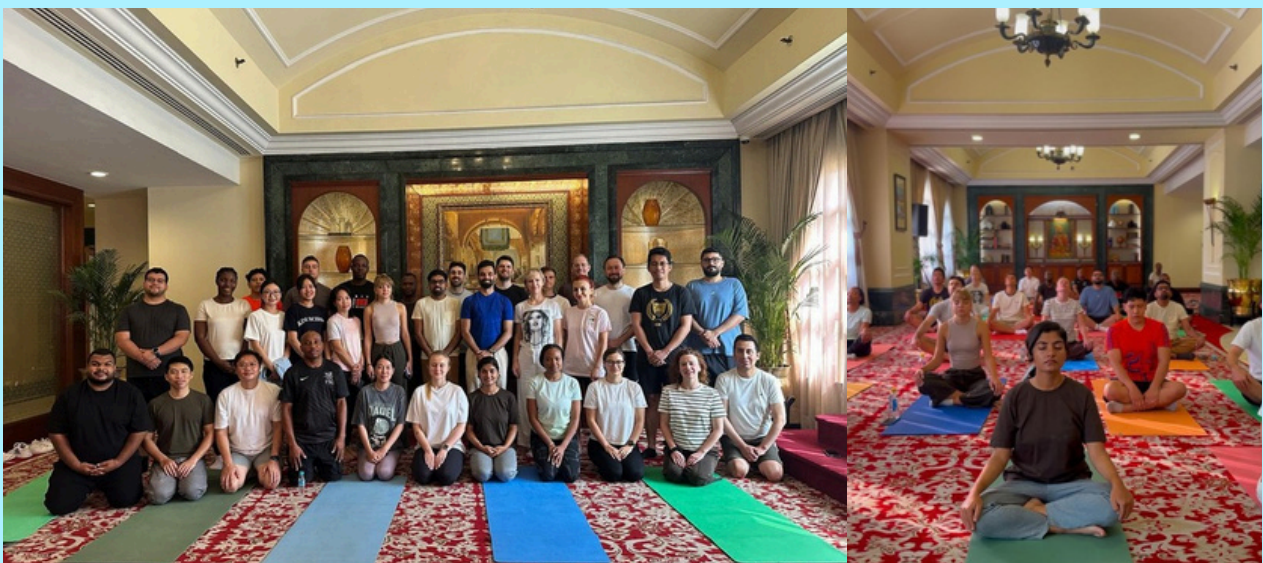


Amb Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS) inaugurated the training programme. He spoke on 'Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy' and focused on strengthening multipolarity and citizen-centric services for development for all.





The two-week curriculum designed to navigate modern diplomatic practices, strategic security paradigms, multilateral governance, and emerging technologies. The diplomats had hands-on Tabletop exercises and knowledge sessions on The Geopolitical World Order in Flux, Geoeconomics, Cyber Security & Cyber Diplomacy, and Geopolitics of Emerging Technologies and Complexity Mapping. Experts from global alliances such as Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance also discussed issues of climate security and sustainability with the diplomats. Sessions on holistic wellness through yoga and Ayurveda were also incorporated in this program.





Sessions and visits highlighting cultural diplomacy, India's rich cultural tapestry and strengthening of people to people ties were an added value to the training program. Lecture cum demonstration in collaboration with ICCR was organized for the cohort. Ms. Tanya Saxena, a Bharatnatyam artist empanelled with ICCR performed for the group and also explained the nuances of Indian performing arts.



To provide participants with first hand engagement with India's heritage, industrial initiatives, and educational institutions, a multi-state tour was also undertaken.

Agra, Uttar Pradesh: Delegates visited the UNESCO World Heritage city of Fatehpur Sikri, One District One Product (ODOP) Centre to observe rural artisan integration into international markets, and toured the magnificent Taj Mahal.



Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh: The delegation visited Jai Vilas Palace (Scindia Palace), participated in a crafts workshop, interacted with students at the Scindia School, and explored Gwalior Fort, Jain rock-cut reliefs and Teli Ka Mandir.





During the Valedictory ceremony, Dean (SSIFS) highlighted the Pro-planet approach and the significance of people-to-people connections in strengthening India's relations with global partners. Participants from Germany, Namibia, Serbia, Montenegro, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka expressed appreciation for the training program and thanked SSIFS on behalf of the 73rd cohort of PCFD.



89th Know India Program (KIP) at SSIFS



The Orientation Program for the 89th Know India Program (KIP) was conducted at SSIFS on Thursday, September 17, 2026, with 24 young participants from 23 countries. The KIP is a flagship MEA program designed to engage with the young Indian Diaspora to provide a civilizational connection to their ancestral roots. The halfday Orientation Program at SSIFS commenced with an inaugural session titled “Bharat: The Land of Knowledge,” by Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS). The second session was taken by Dr. Ritika Sharma, Faculty, SSIFS, on Navigating the AI Ecosystem.

Visit of Delegation from Aikya Connect



The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), Ministry of External Affairs, hosted a delegation of 25 investment professionals from Aikya Connect, an investment network led by Mr. Jai Rupani, its Founder & Chairman. The Dean of SSIFS delivered a comprehensive lecture titled "Indian Foreign Policy and the Role of Diplomacy in Viksit Bharat." The address highlighted the strategic contribution of diplomatic engagement in advancing India's national developmental priorities and long-term vision. The session concluded with an engaging discussion between the visiting finance leaders and SSIFS leadership on aligning private-sector investments with national strategic objectives.

Visit of Delegation from Diplomatic Academy Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore



The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), hosted a 60-member Foreign Service Basic Programme (FSBP) delegation of young diplomats from Singapore on September 30, 2026. The visiting delegation was led by Amb. Lim Hong Huai, Dean of the Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. The event opened with remarks by Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS) and Amb. Lim Hong Huai, both affirming the enduring ties between India and Singapore. Amb. Srivastava subsequently presented the training methodology and transformation at SSIFS and outlined the guiding principles of Indian foreign policy. The session ended with a candid discussion on themes of interest of the visiting delegation..



State Attachment (MCTP-III)

Bridging Local Priorities and Global Opportunities

As part of the Mid-Career Training Program (MCTP-III), officers of the Indian Foreign Service (2002 and 2003 batches) undertook State Attachments across diverse regions of India to gain insights into governance, economic development and emerging opportunities for international engagement. Through interactions with state leadership, senior officials, industry representatives, academic institutions and local stakeholders, the program provided a practical understanding of how state priorities intersect with India's external engagement.

The visits revealed the growing dynamism of India's states as centres of innovation, investment and economic transformation. Officers observed significant progress in sectors such as semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and financial services. Large-scale infrastructure projects, industrial corridors, technology parks and innovation ecosystems reflected the increasing competitiveness of states in attracting investment and fostering entrepreneurship.

The State Attachment offered valuable exposure to the diversity of India's development experience and highlighted practical opportunities for collaboration at the intersection of economic growth, innovation, skills development and international engagement. The program reinforced the importance of sustained coordination among state governments, industry, academia and India's diplomatic network in advancing shared developmental objectives.



Tourism, heritage and cultural assets emerged as important drivers of economic activity and international outreach. States are increasingly leveraging spiritual, ecological, wellness and heritage tourism to attract visitors while promoting local crafts, traditional industries and cultural products. Initiatives supporting MSMEs, start-ups and district-based industries demonstrated the role of local enterprise in generating employment and expanding export potential.

Human capital development was another recurring theme. Discussions highlighted efforts to strengthen skill development, higher education, research and innovation ecosystems while exploring opportunities for international collaboration. Several states expressed interest in expanding partnerships with foreign universities, research institutions and industry, as well as creating pathways for skilled youth to access overseas employment opportunities.

A common observation across the attachment was the desire of state governments to engage more systematically with global partners. Officers identified opportunities to strengthen linkages with investors, technology providers, academic institutions, diaspora communities and international markets. Greater international visibility for state initiatives, products and tourism offerings was seen as essential to translating local strengths into sustainable partnerships.



Key Recommendations by the officers:

- Establish dedicated International Cooperation Cells within state governments to coordinate engagement with Indian Missions and external partners.
- Develop focused international outreach strategies aligned with state strengths and priority sectors.
- Institutionalise regular State–Mission consultations to ensure continuity, follow-up and outcome-oriented engagement.
- Expand partnerships in higher education, research, innovation and technology through collaboration with global institutions.
- Leverage diaspora networks for investment promotion, mentorship, knowledge exchange and market access.
- Strengthen export promotion efforts for MSMEs, start-ups and local products through targeted international outreach.
- Promote tourism through integrated branding, digital visibility and partnerships with international stakeholders.
- Facilitate skill mobility and workforce partnerships in sectors with growing international demand.



Voices from the Officers

Reflections from the MCTP-III State Attachment (2002-03 Batch)

Large part of the discussions in Bhubaneswar centered on how the State Government was trying to align its growth vision with the Vikshit Bharat by 2047 vision of the Central Government. Diversification of the State's industrial base from mining and metallurgy sectors through development of chemical and petro chemical, textiles, electronics and semi-conductors, ICT and pharmaceutical industry clusters appear to be a key strategy of the government for both revenue generation and creation of gainful employment for the youth.



Nikhilesh Giri



Prakash Gupta

State Attachment with Uttar Pradesh provided us with key insights into UP's priorities for international engagement. Uttar Pradesh has the scale, cultural depth, human capital and economic diversity to substantially deepen its global engagement, with significant opportunities in tourism, higher education, advanced technology, investment, MSME exports and cultural diplomacy. The visit also highlighted that the most effective role Missions/Posts is not limited to general promotion but they can act as a bridge between the State and credible international partners by identifying opportunities, building institutional connections, facilitating market access, supporting delegations and maintaining follow-up. Conversely, a State Government can significantly strengthen this process by articulating clear international priorities, preparing investment- and export-ready opportunities and establishing a responsive nodal mechanism, that works on well-defined timelines.

A significant takeaway was the identification of potential for a more structured partnership between the Government of Uttarakhand and Indian Missions abroad, particularly through an established International Cooperation Cell led by an IFS officer if possible. This could facilitate in more organized manner, regular exchange of information on overseas employment requirements, investment opportunities and market demand enabling the State to align its skills, products and enterprises more closely with global opportunities.



Mayank Joshi



Abhishek Singh

Overall the State Attachment was a very important part of our MCTP-III wherein we were given adequate exposure to important initiatives of the State of Gujarat. This attachment has provided clarity about the sectors which we can target for new collaborations with our countries of accreditation and the State of Gujarat. Finally, I would say that I found the attachment highly productive and would recommend SSIFS to consider sending several MCTP participations to the State of Gujarat for their attachment.

Overall, my State attachment to Telangana was very productive and provided enriching experience. It would be very useful in narrating the story of rapidly developing and transforming India in our interactions with foreign delegations. The State of Telangana is focusing on 5Ts (Trade, Tourism, Technology, Talent and Tradition) as part of its development strategy. A visit to Hyderabad with properly curated programme including various sectors would be useful for the senior officials of the Ministry.



Alpana Dubey

Digital Learning Lab at SSIFS: Building a Knowledge Repository

Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj delivered a recorded lecture at the Digital Learning Lab, Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), for the iGOT Karmayogi platform. The session focused on India's Campaign for SHANTI, drawing upon India's diplomatic approach and engagement with the international community. Ambassador Kamboj reflected on India's emphasis on dialogue, diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflicts, and its articulation of these principles at multilateral forums. The recording forms part of SSIFS' ongoing efforts to develop digital learning content and strengthen the repository of high-quality training resources for government officials through the iGOT Karmayogi platform.



Ambassador Dammu Ravi, Former Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs, delivered a recorded lecture at the Digital Learning Lab for the iGOT Karmayogi platform. The session focused on “Harnessing the Potential of FTAs in India's Viksit Bharat Vision”, highlighting the role of Free Trade Agreements in advancing India's economic and trade interests. Ambassador Ravi discussed the significance of FTAs in expanding market access, strengthening India's integration with global value chains and supporting the country's broader economic aspirations towards Viksit Bharat.

Shri Chaitanya Prasad delivered a recorded lecture at the Digital Learning Lab for the iGOT Karmayogi platform. The session, titled “Public Diplomacy: Themes, Variations and Outreach,” explored the evolving role of public diplomacy and its significance in communicating India's perspectives to diverse audiences. He highlighted different approaches to public outreach, the importance of effective communication and storytelling, and the role of cultural and people-centric engagement in strengthening India's global connect.

About Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) was established in 1986 by the Government of India primarily to cater to the professional training needs of the Indian Foreign Service and the Ministry of External Affairs. SSIFS has diversified its activities to include courses for foreign diplomats in its efforts to build bridges of friendship and cooperation with countries around the world and courses of interest to staff and officers at all levels of the Ministry of External Affairs as well as other Civil Services.

Within Indian Foreign Service, SSIFS conducts training programs annually at four levels - Induction Training Program of nine months for IFS Officer Trainees at entry level, and Mid Career Training Programs of three weeks duration - MCTP I (for 10-11 years in Service), MCTP II (for 15-16 years in Service), & MCTP III (for 24-25 years in Service).

For Foreign Diplomats, SSIFS conducts every month one specific program which includes three annual flagship programs in the form of - Disarmament & International Security Affairs Fellowship Training program for three weeks, Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) for two weeks, and Global South Young Diplomats Forum (GSYDF) Training Program for two weeks. Other months, SSIFS organises country, region, grouping, or themes-specific training programs of a maximum of two weeks, emanating from 110 MoUs that SSIFS has signed in the past three decades.

SSIFS has an extensive and expanding pool of guest faculty drawn from experts in the fields of domain competencies like International Relations, Diplomacy, Economy, Trade, Tourism, Technology, Governance, Media & Journalism, Defence & Security, Culture & Indian Knowledge System, Yoga & Ayurveda, and Behavioural Competencies like Emotional Intelligence, Purposeful & Collaborative Leadership, Communications & Negotiations Skills and Progressive Learning & Problem Solving Attitude.

SSIFS is headed by the Dean, a senior Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of External Affairs. The current Dean is Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, IFS officer of the 1997 batch. The Institute is located at Baba Gangnath Marg, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi.



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