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VIDESH SEWA

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Mid Career Training Program - II for 2011 Batch IFS Officers (05-16 October 2026)

The Group called on External Affairs Minister on 12th October



Special Course for Foreign Diplomats from the League of Arab States (21 - 30 October 2026)

The Group called on External Affairs Minister on 26th October



FROM DEAN'S DESK

Dear Readers, Dear Friends,



The month of October saw 63 foreign diplomats, 34 Indian Foreign Service officers, 61 Indian Railways Management Service officer trainees, 75 University students, and 25 young members of the Indian Diaspora visiting SSIFS for training programs. Diversity of programs and participants was the flavour of the month. We could also sign our 111th MoU with Libya this month. We contributed 5 new lectures made at our Digital Learning Lab to the iGoT Mission Karmayogi Platform in October.

We conducted two programs for foreign diplomats in October: in the first half for 34 Egyptian diplomats, and in the second half for 29 League of Arab States diplomats. We could overhear conversations in Arabic among the participants and between them and some of our visiting faculty who spoke the language. While the Egyptian diplomats were on the second bilateral program for them after the first one last October, the LAS diplomats program was the result of an MoU signed between the LAS Secretary General and Dean(SSIFS) on 31 January on the sidelines of 2nd meeting of India and LAS Foreign Ministers hosted at Bharat Mandapam by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar. In the first program held at SSIFS on 21-30 October, 16 out of 22 LAS member states were represented.

Most of these 63 diplomats visited India for the first time. These programs seek to build lasting professional connections while familiarising participants with India as a civilisational state whose engagement with the world spans centuries. By making programs on an experiential learning model, we register a bigger impact. These are not standalone programs; the participants become a part of our alumni network - a network for future reference.

The Program for MCTP-II for our IFS officers of the 2011 batch was curated with a great deal of attention towards their specific needs at this stage of their career. With three days outside SSIFS, one at Bharat Mandapam, one at Jindal Global University, and one at JNB, MEA, we gave the participants an opportunity to experience diverse themes curated by our partner institutions and mentors. At SSIFS, we curated tabletop exercises and brainstorming sessions where the officers were active protagonists, and our experts were observers. The aim was to allow them to foresee the future and try to address the issues in simulations.

Next month, we have two programs at SSIFS for foreign diplomats again, and I would have the privilege of representing India in the 51st Meeting of the International Forum of Diplomatic Training in Doha (Qatar) during 8-11 November, where I would share some of the best practices that we have developed at SSIFS since the last meeting of IFDT in Peru last November.

With best wishes to our readers for Deepawali from the SSIFS family!

Raj Kumar Srivastava
New Delhi
31 October 2026

Training Program for Foreign Diplomats

Visits in the 73rd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats

01-02 October 2026

The delegation visited Gandhi Smriti, formerly known as the Birla House, where Gandhi ji spent his last 144 days. It is an organization dedicated to preserving the life, teachings, and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. The cohort was inspired by Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence, peace, and simplicity through exhibitions at the museum on his life and journey. In addition to this, they also visited the Prime Ministers' Museum in Delhi that showcased the lives, contributions, and achievements of India's Prime Ministers since independence. As part of the program, the delegation also visited Humayun's Tomb in Delhi. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a magnificent example of Mughal architecture and a landmark in India's rich cultural heritage.





Training Program for Indian Railways Management Service

(06 - 08 October 2026)



SSIFS conducted the three-day (06 - 08 October) training program for 61 officials from the Indian Railways Management Service(Traffic). Amb. Raj Srivastava, Dean(SSIFS), inaugurated the program with a session on the "Guiding Principles of Indian Foreign Policy." The session focused on the Thematic categories of Indian Diplomacy, the 5 Ts, or pillars connecting India's foreign policy to citizens' and states' aspirations and the significance of Indian Knowledge Systems in contemporary times.

Special Course for Foreign Diplomats from the Arab Republic of Egypt (07 October - 16 October 2026)

The 10-day program was attended by 34 newly inducted diplomats from the Arab Republic of Egypt. The course was inaugurated by Dean, SSIFS, Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava in the presence of Ambassador Dr. Yasser Elwy, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs & Director of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies of Egypt.







In his inaugural address, Amb. Srivastava highlighted the key guiding principles of Indian Foreign Policy, the concept of Global South & the initiatives adopted by India in the light of contemporary global challenges. He also covered the 'Theories of International Relations' & their use in diplomacy.

The course covered a range of issues, including evolving geopolitical dynamics, economic resilience, Environmental Diplomacy, emerging technologies and digital governance, climate action, energy security, Sustainable Tourism, Cyber Security, Multilateral Diplomacy and sustainable development.

Under the political Diplomacy Module, Amb. Dammu Ravi talked about how the fragmented world order is shaping the politics and economy. He stated that the world is in flux and the global reset is taking place wherein on the one hand the unipolar and bipolar forces are at play while on the other the multipolarity is on rise.



The ten-day program featured 24 knowledge sessions covering international and regional issues such as the evolution and advancement of India-Egypt strategic partnership, Strategic Engagement in the Gulf Countries, fragmented world order and its impact on geopolitics and geoeconomics, India's foreign policy initiatives in ASEAN & Indo-Pacific, maritime security & connectivity as a force multiplier, India's disaster relief operations during times of crises, India's technological advancements, Digital Public Infrastructure, Reform of the multilateral institutions like WTO, Governance of the Global Commons, Defense Diplomacy & Non Traditional Security Threats, artificial intelligence, public diplomacy and communication skills, and the sources of renewable energy like Solar and Green Hydrogen. To deepen their understanding of India's democratic and developmental journey, participants visited the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, which showcases the contributions of India's Prime Ministers since independence. The delegation appreciated its innovative and immersive displays, which offered insights into India's political evolution and democratic institutions. All the diplomats enjoyed and deeply appreciated their visit to the Taj Mahal for its beautiful facade, brilliant architecture, sheer scale and use of pietra dura (inlay work).



The Diplomats also had an opportunity to learn about Indian classical dance and tradition during a lecture cum demonstration by Ms Neelima Beri, a renowned Kathak performer and a disciple of Padma Bhushan Pandit Birju Maharaj. Ms Beri and her group captivated the audience with their intricate footwork (tatkar), enhanced by ankle bells, and expressive mime (abhinaya).





Dean SSIFS conferred Valedictory certificates to the diplomats for completing the special course at SSIFS . He highlighted the key outcomes of the training program, noting its contribution to enhancing participants' understanding of contemporary policy challenges and opportunities. The programme also facilitated the exchange of perspectives on shared developmental concerns, strengthened professional networks, and promoted diplomatic engagement between India and Egypt.






Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" (plantation of saplings)

As part of the Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign 2026, a plantation drive under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative was organised led by Dean, on 2nd October, followed by the Swachhata Pledge, felicitation of the Safai Mitras, and Shramdaan.





Special Course for Foreign Diplomats from the League of Arab States (21 October - 30 October 2026)

The ten-day program brought together 29 mid-career diplomats from member states of the League of Arab States (LAS). The comprehensive curriculum was structured around distinct themes and core competencies covering political diplomacy, trade, technology, regional security, sustainable development, and public diplomacy—combining intensive classroom modules with high-level engagements and experiential site visits.

The program commenced with inaugural remarks delivered by Amb. Yusuf Mohamed Abdulla Jameel, Head of the Mission of the League of Arab States in New Delhi, who emphasized the deep-rooted civilizational bonds and expanding partnerships between India and the Arab world, more so in the context of the Executive Program of the India-Arab Cooperation Forum (2026-2028). Welcoming the participants, Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS) briefly touched upon the founding principles of Indian foreign policy and the shared priorities of Global South nations.

Delving into the foundation of bilateral and regional ties, Amb. Talmiz Ahmad presented a historical template of centuries of maritime, commercial, and cultural interaction across the Indian Ocean and West Asia and Dr. Suresh Kumar M, Joint Secretary (West Asia and North Africa) focused on India's Policy towards West Asia and North Africa underlining the mutual interdependence.







Amb. Asoke Mukerji addressed frameworks governing peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and the role of multilateral institutions in these processes, while Mr Vikas Katheria led an in-depth discussion on emerging threats to peace analyzing joint counter-terror mechanisms and intelligence sharing. Captain Anurag Bisen underlined the need for protection of Sea Lines of Communication to strengthen maritime connectivity and foster cooperation.

In the technology domain, themes like AI and Cybersecurity, and intersection of Artificial Intelligence and healthcare were taken up while outlining India's experience in fostering innovation through Startup culture.



To sharpen core functional and behavioural competencies, the program conducted practical modules on protocol and diplomatic conventions, and experiential sessions on emotional intelligence. Amb. Vikas Swarup guided the diplomats on the landscape of public diplomacy in the age of social media and AI. Further, cultural preservation and shared intangible heritage between India and Arab world was addressed by Ms. Nerupama Modwel, Director-ICH (INTACH).

The diplomatic delegation had a call on the External Affairs Minister (EAM) on 26 October 2026 at Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan (JNB), wherein Dr S Jaishankar outlined the far reaching impact of ongoing conflicts and the transformative role of technology in shaping today's world. Further, he underlined the need for close economic cooperation among Global South partners and encouraged them to use their time in India to deepen their understanding of the country and its people.



Beyond the seminar halls, the diplomats gained firsthand exposure to India's rich cultural tapestry and democratic heritage through curated field excursions, beginning with a visit to the historic Taj Mahal in Agra followed by a Visit to the One District One Product (ODOP) Centre, introducing them to indigenous crafts, traditional industries and their integration into contemporary value chains. Alongside there were institutional visits planned such as the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya.






The participants also engaged in a lecture-demonstration by Ms Sangeeta Mazumder on Kathak, classical performing arts supported by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).







The course concluded on 30 October 2026 with a formal valedictory ceremony at SSIFS, where participants were awarded certificates of completion, marking another successful chapter in diplomatic training and South-South cooperation between India and the League of Arab States.

Mid-Career Training Program-II for the 2011 Batch of IFS



SSIFS organised the MCTP-II for the 2011 Batch of IFS officers from 05 to 23 October 2026. The Program was designed to deepen strategic understanding, strengthen leadership capabilities and enhance professional competencies in response to the evolving demands of Indian diplomacy. In the last week of the program, officers visited their respective states for state attachment to understand states' priorities in engaging with the world. The Program commenced with a welcome session by Dean(SSIFS) and featured a comprehensive series of expert-led sessions, interactive discussions, case studies, simulations and institutional engagements. The training brought together senior diplomats, policymakers, strategic affairs experts, academics and domain specialists to deliberate on contemporary foreign policy challenges and emerging opportunities for India. The Program covered key dimensions of India's foreign policy, including economic and defence diplomacy, India's major-power relationships, neighbourhood engagement and the changing geopolitical landscape. Sessions on India's relations with the United States, Russia and China examined the strategic implications of shifting global power dynamics. Discussions on India's neighbourhood focused on relations with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, alongside challenges involving Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Economic diplomacy and India's development ambitions formed an important component of the Program. Sessions explored the promotion of India's national narrative at home and abroad, the role of technology in diplomacy, and the potential of trade, technology and transformation in advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat. A dedicated engagement at Bharat Mandapam on 9 October focused on the role of trade, technology and transformation (3Ts) diplomacy in realising this vision.

Defence diplomacy and India's emergence as a major defence exporter were also examined, including a case study on the BrahMos success story. These discussions highlighted the growing importance of integrating strategic partnerships, indigenous capabilities and economic interests in India's international engagement.

Recognising the increasing significance of technological transformation in international relations, the Program included sessions on artificial intelligence, new technological initiatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, and case studies on cyber issues. A complexity analysis tabletop exercise (TTX), curated by Amb.Pankaj Saran and NATSTRAT, encouraged participants to engage with complex strategic scenarios and strengthen their analytical and decision-making capabilities.

Further discussions addressed geotechnology, global geopolitical risks affecting business, and the geopolitical flux in West Asia. These engagements provided opportunities to assess the intersection of technology, national security, economic interests and foreign policy in an increasingly interconnected world.







Leadership, Institutional Learning and Citizen-Centric Diplomacy

The Program placed considerable emphasis on leadership, resilience and the human dimensions of diplomatic service. Sessions on heart-centred leadership for Viksit Bharat 2047, emotional intelligence inspired by ancient Indian wisdom, and leadership for resilience explored approaches to effective leadership, professional adaptability and decision-making under pressure.

Institutional engagements included a visit to O.P. Jindal Global University, curated by Ambassador Mohan Kumar and Dr. Sreeram Chaulia, offering an opportunity to engage with academic perspectives on international affairs. Participants also attended sessions on the successful management of a diplomatic mission, drawing lessons from the PEMS case study of Japan, and on the experiences of Heads of Missions taking up their first assignments.

Citizen-centric services and mobility, alongside practical case studies, reinforced the importance of responsive consular services and effective mission management in advancing India's interests and serving Indian citizens abroad.











Sessions with External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary

As part of the Program, participants called on the External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, on 12 October 2026, and the Foreign Secretary, Shri Vikram Misri, on 8 October 2026. These engagements provided opportunities to reflect on India's foreign policy priorities, contemporary diplomatic challenges and the responsibilities of Indian Foreign Service officers in advancing the country's international objectives.

The MCTP-II Program reaffirmed SSIFS's commitment to continuous professional development and lifelong learning within the Indian Foreign Service. By combining strategic perspectives with practical case studies, technology-focused discussions and leadership development, the Program sought to equip officers with the knowledge, adaptability and institutional perspective required to navigate an increasingly complex global environment and contribute effectively to India's diplomatic priorities.



90th Know India Program (KIP) at SSIFS

On 23 October 2026, SSIFS hosted an orientation program for 25 young Indian diaspora participants from 16 countries during the 90th edition of the Know India Program. Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Dean (SSIFS), delivered a presentation titled "Bharat: Land of Knowledge," connecting the diaspora with their ancestral roots by highlighting India's heritage through Sanskrit, Vedic wisdom, and Chanakya's principles of Peace, Prosperity, and Pride. Additionally, Fintech expert Dr. Vidushi Chaturvedi addressed how India leverages Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to serve humanity and advance towards its vision of Viksit Bharat.



A four-member delegation from Libya visited SSIFS on 1st October to sign an MoU between the two diplomatic academies. The 111th MoU for SSIFS was signed by the Dean (SSIFS) & Mr Khaled A.Bukhres, Director of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies, MOFA. The MoU signing was followed by a meeting & working lunch that focused on strengthening cooperation in the field of diplomatic training.







On 6th October, Dean(SSIFS) held a productive discussion with Ambassador-designate H.E. Ms Rina Yessenia Lozano Gallegos and her colleagues from the Embassy of El Salvador at SSIFS. Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in the area of diplomatic training under the existing institutional MoU between the diplomatic academies of the two nations.







Bringing Foreign Policy closer to the Youth of India

A delegation from OP Jindal Global University visited SSIFS on the forenoon of 27 October, where Dean SSIFS, Amb. Raj Kumar Srivastava, addressed them on “The Making of a Diplomat: Diplomacy and Foreign Policy”, highlighting the vision of Viksit Bharat and India’s evolving role in global affairs. Amb Jitendra Nath Misra brought the cohort which is doing a program under him at the University.



Faculty members and students of Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, visited SSIFS on the afternoon of 27 October for an engaging interaction with the Dean(SSIFS) on Indian Foreign Policy and Leadership. The Dean, Amb Raj Srivastava, was felicitated on the occasion.



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 111 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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