



# isas

INSTITUTE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES  
inaugural annual report  
2011/2012



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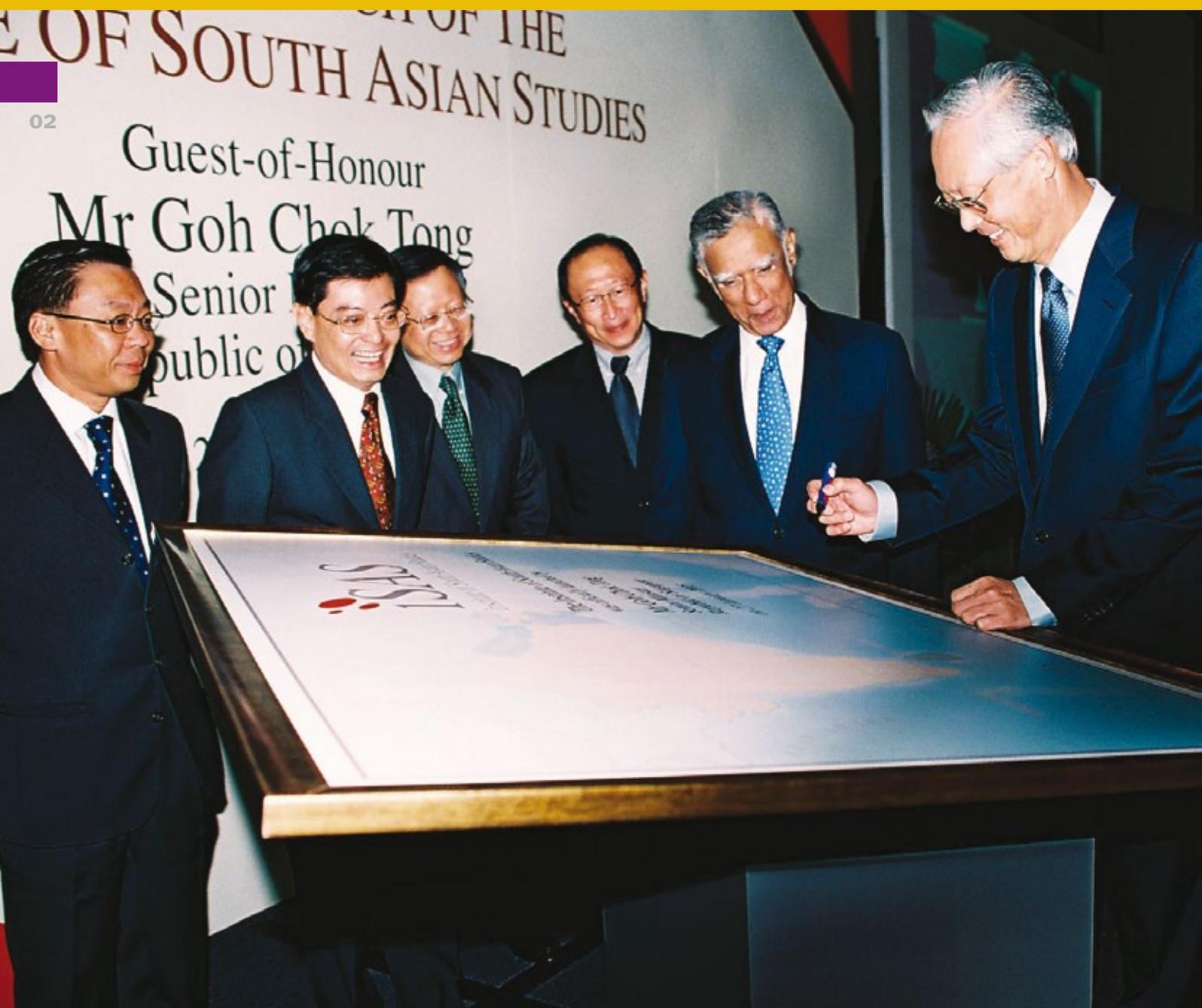
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# PREFACE

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The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore, presents its annual report. The document in your hands traces the gradual rise of ISAS which was founded in 2004. As a fully functional institution with several plans for the future, ISAS intends to learn from the lessons of its formative phase and move ahead.

# PATRON'S MESSAGE



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At the turn of the century, India was growing rapidly and increasing its regional influence. A lot of changes, both political and economic, were also taking place in the other South Asian countries. As then Prime Minister, I felt that we should better understand the region's transformation and impact. I therefore raised the idea of setting up a research institute on South Asia in 2003. Within a year, in July 2004, the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was established as an autonomous institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). I officially opened ISAS in January 2005.

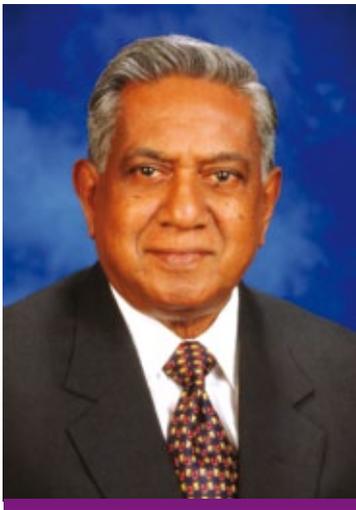
ISAS has gained a reputation as a serious institute that produces useful and insightful publications on current development as well as long term political, social and economic trends in South Asia. ISAS has also attracted many prominent experts – academics and practitioners – to share their views on South Asia at its seminars, lectures and conferences. These activities enhance our understanding of India and South Asia, and provide useful networking opportunities for policy makers, academics, and businessmen with an interest in South Asia. ISAS also collaborates closely with other reputable research institutions, think tanks and experts in Singapore and abroad.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Management Board and Management Team of ISAS, in particular Ambassador-At-Large Gopinath Pillai and Professor Tan Tai Yong, for setting up ISAS and guiding it to where it is today. ISAS will face tougher challenges as it strives to become a premier research institute on South Asia. I am confident that ISAS can succeed with dedication, hard work, and the continued backing of its friends and supporters.



**Goh Chok Tong**  
*Emeritus Senior Minister  
Republic of Singapore; and  
Patron of ISAS*

# MESSAGE FROM Mr S R Nathan Sixth President Republic of Singapore



04

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To many in Singapore, nay South-east Asia, South Asia comprises lands of argument, debate, protests and compromise.

ISAS, since its establishment has, in a spirit of scholarly dialogue, research and scholarship endeavoured to bring to our attention the reality of South Asia - as lands with their diverse political, cultural and historical links with us - why they need to be better understood and appreciated.

I wish ISAS every success in its continuing journey of promoting better understanding and appreciation of another Asian civilisation, of which we are a part.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S R Nathan', written in a cursive style.

Mr S R Nathan



President S R Nathan strikes the dholak to launch the South Asian diaspora networking platform on 4 November 2009. (L-R) ISAS Board members Professor Wang Gangwu and Mr S Chandra Das, ISAS Director Professor Tan Tai Yong and ISAS Chairman Ambassador Gopinath Pillai

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## MY ISAS STORY UNFINISHED

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06

When ignorance is not bliss, it is folly to be unwise! Far from being a word-play, smart thinking on these lines led to the founding of Singapore's Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) in the 2004-2005 span of time.

Mr Goh Chok Tong had earlier realised how little Singaporeans knew about India when he tried to start 'a mild India fever' during his premiership. He decided that it was necessary to have an institute that would study South Asia and India in particular. The announcement of the intention to start such an institute was made by Mr Lee Hsien Loong, then Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, during his visit to India. I was part of his delegation, but little did I realise that I was being considered for the post of Chairman of that institute.

I was approached on this by the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Mr Heng Swee Keat, who spoke on behalf of the then MTI Minister, Mr George Yeo. I happily accepted the position as Chairman of South Asia Institute (SAI), the name initially suggested.

It was not in character for me to be the kind of Chairman who would preside over quarterly meetings of a management board and do little else. I was also conscious that I might be the only person from a private-business background to serve as Chairman of a research institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Apart from doing business in all the major countries of South Asia, I had also served as Singapore's High Commissioner to

Pakistan. With a fairly credible network of contacts in the region, especially in India, I felt inspired to try and put these factors, taken together, to good effect in the cause of the planned institute.

My first request to Mr Heng was to change the proposed name of the institute. The acronym SAI had religious connotations in India and its meaning in Chinese dialects was not very appropriate. My suggestion that the new body be named the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was accepted.

To move forward from the starting block, even as the formal search for a suitable Director would take its course, I requested NUS for the services of Professor Tan Tai Yong, then Dean of Arts and Social Sciences. He was a historian with Ph D from Cambridge on Indian History. NUS agreed and so did Professor Tan. Happily, he continues as the Director of ISAS. Early on, we also recruited Dr S Narayan, an eminent economist and a policy specialist from India, as Head of Research.

With that, ISAS was all set to roll ahead, and we are rapidly moving forward. Our track record in conducting research speaks for itself. With a strong team, ISAS is poised to scale new heights.

Raising our public profile, we successfully organised the first-ever global-scale South Asian Diaspora Convention (SADC) in July 2011. The bi-annual SADC was the brainchild

“ Our track record in conducting research speaks for itself. With a strong team, ISAS is poised to scale new heights. ”

of the then President of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan. He felt that a confluence of the South Asian Diaspora leaders and members would help promote greater economic integration of the region. The practical idea has gained traction internationally, and the next SADC will take place in November 2013.

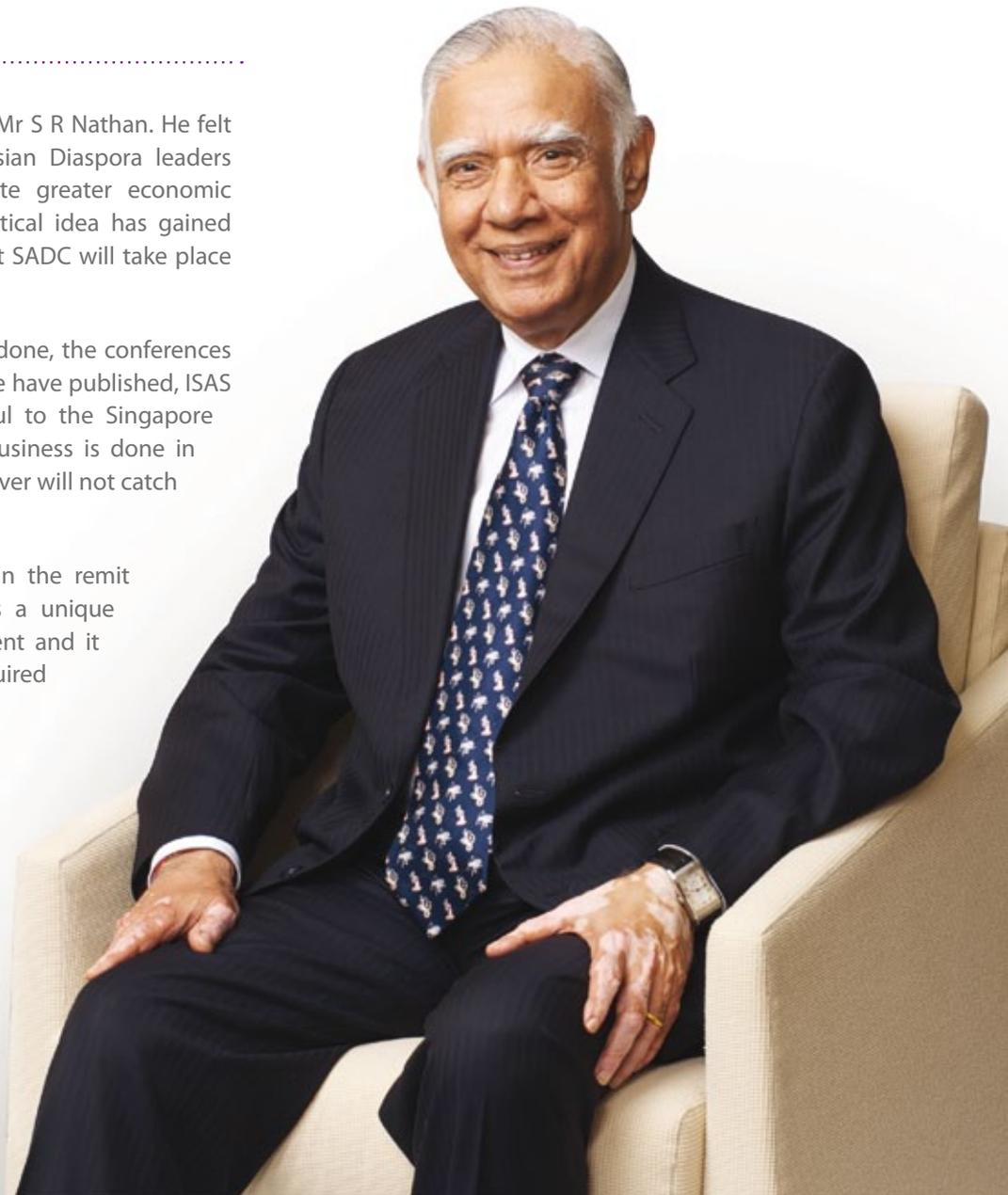
In spite of all the research we have done, the conferences we have organised and the books we have published, ISAS has still not been sufficiently useful to the Singapore businessman to understand how business is done in India. Mr Goh's idea of a mild India fever will not catch on until we address this need.

I realise that this will not be within the remit of a research institute. But ISAS is a unique organisation in a unique environment and it needs to have a range of activities required in this environment. This unfinished business will be an area of focus in our next stage of development.



**Ambassador Gopinath Pillai**

Chairman of ISAS



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



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“ ISAS studies contemporary South Asian issues from the standpoints of both scholarship and policy imperatives ”

## VANTAGE WINDOW ON SOUTH ASIA

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The grand vision of a globalised world often obscures the changing dynamics of its various geo-political and geo-economic regions. It will of course be irrational to ignore the big picture of an integrating world. At the same time, it will not be sensible to overlook the specifics of diverse regions and sub-regions across the globe. For Singapore, located at a strategic intersection in maritime Asia, a multi-layer look at the global scene and at the different regional domains is especially important at any given time.

Policy planners and academics alike recognise the need for such multi-tier knowledge. This is how Singapore came to conceptualise the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) over eight years ago. Indeed, and in tune with the philosophy of academia, Singapore focuses on the study of globalisation while being home to several institutes that take a close-up view of one region of Asia or another.

As originally planned, the ongoing evolution of ISAS has two functional streams. Essentially an autonomous research institute at the NUS, ISAS is a non-teaching hub of scholars and associates. Its core stream of research is enriched by the inevitable logic that ISAS must function as an independent think-tank as well. Funded by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Trade and Industry, ISAS does study contemporary South Asian issues from the standpoints of both scholarship and policy imperatives. We endeavour to ensure that deep scholarly research will inform and enrich our analyses and interpretations of contemporary affairs. It must be emphasised, in the same breath, that ISAS does not pursue the national or private agendas of any government or non-government organisation in any South Asian country or elsewhere in the world.

At ISAS, which offers a vantage window on South Asia, we not only disseminate our perspectives through research papers but also engage other institutes and the general public in Singapore and beyond through conferences, seminars and other forms of public engagement. Such external outreach, which constitutes the second stream of our activities, has often helped enhance our public profile.

Contemporary trend-lines in politics and economics of the South Asian countries, as also their foreign and defence policies, attract our prime attention. However, ISAS does not limit its sights. Relatively unusual subjects like Gandhara Buddhist art in Pakistan or India-China media mediation or the journey of a painter have, illustratively, given us a wider canvas of responsible public outreach.

Special mention must be made of our innovative focus on South Asian Diaspora as a realm of research and as a domain of practical outreach towards the communities. The Diaspora focus has indeed helped ISAS raise its quotient of mindshare among South Asians worldwide.

Having registered a fair measure of success in these eight years, ISAS hopes to intensify its research activities, enhance its think-tank capabilities, and raise its public profile as a socially responsible institute that is not solely rooted in the proverbial ivory tower traditions.



**Professor Tan Tai Yong**

*Director of ISAS*

# MANAGEMENT BOARD

*Ambassador  
Gopinath Pillai*



*Chairman, Management Board  
Institute of South Asian Studies; and  
Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore*

Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, Chairman of the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) and its proactive architect from 2004 when the Institute was conceptualised, ranks high among a number of public officials who have made Singapore a pragmatic thought leader in Asia and beyond. Right now, he is concurrently Deputy Chairman of Ang Mo Kio-Thye Hua Kwan Hospital Limited, administered by a non-government organisation for step-down care. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Indian Heritage Centre project and Chairman of its Concept and Content Sub-committee.

As a distinguished diplomat, he was Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Iran between 1990 and 2008. He has also served as the city-state's High Commissioner to Pakistan.

Ambassador Pillai has served Singapore in several other positions – Chairman of NTUC Fairprice Co-operative Ltd for 10 years; Trustee of NTUC Healthcare Co-operative Ltd; Director of NTUC Choice Homes Co-operative Ltd; and President of the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS). He was made a Distinguished Member of NUSS in 2011.

His varied interests as a captain of international trade and industry span a spectrum of investments in education, logistics and information technology. He is the Founder Chairman of a listed port-related logistics company in India, Gateway Distriparks Ltd, and its subsidiary, Snowman Logistics Pte Ltd, and the Director of another subsidiary, Gateway Rail Freight Ltd. He is also a Director at AEC Education Plc, listed on AIM in London. He is an Independent Director at Jurong International Holdings Pte Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of JTC.

Ambassador Pillai is a recipient of several professional and public service awards. These include the Friend of Labour (NTUC 1987); Meritorious Award (NTUC 1990); Friend of MCD from Singapore's Ministry of Community Development (1998); and Friend of IT from Singapore Computer Society (2001). The Singapore Government conferred on Ambassador Pillai the Public Service Star Award (BBM) in 1999 and BBM (BAR) at the 2009 National Day Awards. Most recently, India honoured Ambassador Pillai with the Padma Shri Award, which was announced on the occasion of India's Republic Day celebrations in January 2012.

(From 1 August 2004 to present)



**Professor  
Tan Eng Chye**

*Deputy President (Academic Affairs); and  
Provost, National University of Singapore*

Professor Tan Eng Chye is Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost at the National University of Singapore (NUS), overseeing and driving special strategic initiatives of critical importance for the University. He also has oversight of the development and implementation of new educational programmes and initiatives; and is responsible for educational quality assurance, overseeing admission policies and processes to ensure best quality enrolments.

Professor Tan initiated the Special Programme in Science in 1996, the precursor of NUS' Talent Development Programme which was re-structured as the current University Scholars Programme. A passionate teacher, he has won several teaching awards at the University and Faculty level -- he was awarded the Innovative Teaching Award 1998 by the Faculty of Science, the Teaching Excellence Award for Innovative Teaching 1998 by the University and the University Teaching Excellence Award 2004/2005.

Professor Tan obtained his Bachelor in Mathematics (First Class Honours, 1985) at NUS and his PhD (1989) at Yale University. He joined NUS in 1985 as a Senior Tutor and has held visiting positions at various universities overseas such as the Rutgers University, University of Washington at Seattle, Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan; as well as the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

(From 26 April 2007 to present)



**Professor  
Wang Gungwu**

*Chairman, East Asian Institute  
National University of Singapore*

Professor Wang Gungwu is University Professor, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Emeritus Professor, Australian National University, Canberra.

He obtained his PhD (History) from the University of London and MA (History) and BA Hons (History) from the University of Malaya. His research interests include Chinese history, the overseas Chinese, nationalism and migrations.

Professor Wang was Vice Chancellor of The University of Hong Kong from 1986 to 1995, and was Chairman of the Institute of East Asian Political Economy (1996-1997) before it was reconstituted as the East Asian Institute, NUS. He was its Director from 1997 to 2007 when he was also Faculty Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

His appointments and awards include Chairman, East Asian Institute and The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS; Chairman, Board of Trustees, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Vice Chairman, Board of Governors, Chinese Heritage Centre; Member, Board of Governors, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University; Fellow, Australian Academy of the Humanities (President, 1980-1983); Foreign Honorary Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Wang is a member of the Editorial Board or Advisory Editor of many international journals, including Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, The China Journal, Japanese Journal of Political Science, and Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society.

(From 30 May 2005 to present)



**Professor  
Tan Tai Yong**

*Director, Institute of South Asian Studies; and  
Vice Provost (Student Life), Office of the Provost  
National University of Singapore*

Professor Tan Tai Yong is Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS). Since the formation of ISAS, Professor Tan has been charting its course at the helm of day-to-day professional and administrative affairs. He was Acting Director of the Institute from July 2004 to July 2006 and also from April 2007 to May 2008. Professor Tan was appointed Director of ISAS on 1 June 2008.

An accomplished historian, Professor Tan is concurrently Vice Provost (Student Life) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Prior to this, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS from 2004 to 2009.

Professor Tan has written extensively on South Asian history as well as on Singapore and the larger Southeast Asian region. His recent books include Singapore – A 700 Year History (2009); Creating ‘Greater Malaysia’: Decolonisation and the Politics of Merger (2008); Partition and Post-Colonial South Asia: A Reader (co-edited, 2007); The Garrison State (2005); The Transformation of Southeast Asia: International Perspectives on Decolonisation (co-edited, 2003); and The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia (co-authored, 2000).

The ISAS books that Professor Tan has edited are: Socio-Political and Economic Challenges for South Asia (May 2009); Challenges of Economic Growth, Inequality and Conflict in South Asia (November 2009); South Asia: Societies in Political and Economic Transition (January 2010); and A Resurgent China: South Asian Perspectives (co-edited with Professor S D Muni of ISAS, January 2012).

(From 1 August 2004 to present)



**Mr Bilahari  
Kausikan**

*Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Mr Bilahari Kausikan is currently the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr Kausikan was educated at Raffles Institution, the University of Singapore and Columbia University in New York.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he has held several positions dealing with the US, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, as the Press Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and as the Ministry’s Spokesman.

Mr Kausikan has served as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York from, with concurrent accreditation as High Commissioner to Canada and Ambassador to Mexico. He had also served as Ambassador to the Russian Federation from, with concurrent accreditation as Ambassador to Finland.

In August 2001, Mr Kausikan was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Gold). In December 2002, he was awarded the ‘Order of Bernardo O’Higgins’ with the rank of ‘Gran Cruz’ by the President of the Republic of Chile. In August 2012, he was awarded the Pingat Jasa Gemilang (Meritorious Service Medal).

Mr Kausikan was the Second Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from August 2001 to August 2010.

(From 24 July 2007 to present)



**Mr Ng How Yue**

*Second Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Trade and Industry*

Mr Ng How Yue was appointed Second Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in October 2011.

Before that, Mr Ng was the Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister from September 2008.

Mr Ng was the Deputy Secretary (Trade) of the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 2007, where he was responsible for Singapore's trade and external economic relations. This includes the negotiation and implementation of free trade agreements with Singapore's key trading partners, as well as promoting Singapore's interests at regional and multilateral fora such as ASEAN, APEC, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and World Trade Organization.

Mr Ng's previous postings include the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Singapore Customs, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts. He was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) at the National Day Awards in 2004.

Mr Ng graduated from the University of London, Imperial College of Science & Technology, with a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronics Engineering (1st Class Honours). In 2005, he also attended the prestigious Sloan Fellows Program, where he received a Masters of Science in Management.

Mr Ng is currently a Board Director of the Central Provident Fund Board.

(From 1 December 2011 to present)



**Mr Sat Pal  
Khattar**

*Chairman, Khattar Holdings Private Limited; and  
Co-Chairman, Singapore-India Partnership Foundation*

Mr Sat Pal Khattar is the Chairman of Khattar Holdings Private Limited, his family's holdings company.

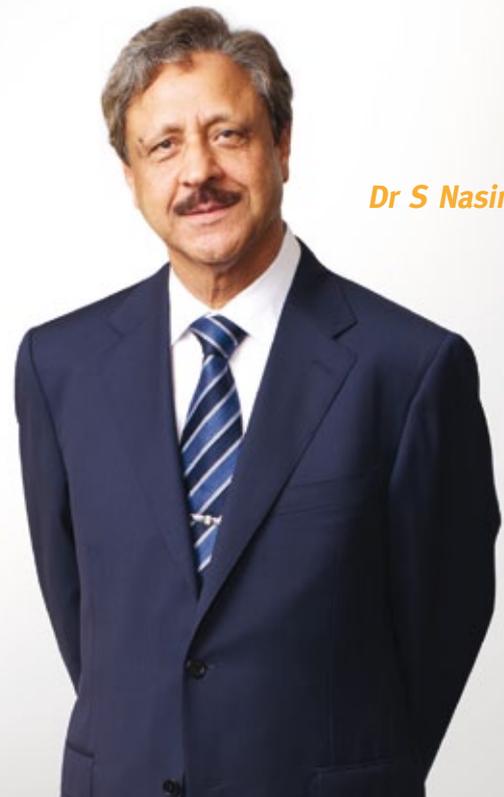
He is also Director of Haw Par Brothers International Ltd. He was previously Senior Partner of Khattar Wong and Partners, a law practice in Singapore.

He is also a Director of Gateway Distriparks, which is listed in India. He is a Life Trustee of Singapore Indian Development Association. He was previously a member of the Presidential Council of Minority Rights in Singapore and Chairman, Board of Trustees, Singapore Business Federation.

(From 10 June 2005 to present)



**Mr Girija Pande**



**Dr S Nasim**

*Executive Chairman  
Apex Advisors Pte Ltd*

Mr Girija Pande is the Executive Chairman of Apex Advisors Pte Ltd, a company that provides advice and mentoring to businesses in the Asia Pacific. He has tied up with Avalon Consulting of India to provide Strategic Consulting Services in the Region.

Mr Pande has spent over three decades across APAC in senior positions with ANZ Banking Group and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Ltd, a global IT company. In his last role as Chairman of TCS, Mr Pande grew its APAC businesses from scratch to over 11,000 associates in 14 countries, including 2,500 in China. He was conferred the Best CEO Award in 2010 by the Singapore HR Institute.

Mr Pande served as Economic Advisor to the Mayor of Guangzhou. He serves on the Boards of a few listed and non listed companies in Singapore and is on the Advisory Board of Singapore Management University. He also served on the Board of Singapore International Chamber of Commerce.

(From 1 March 2012 to present)

*Global Chief Executive Officer  
Meinhardt Group International Ltd*

Dr S Nasim is Global CEO of Meinhardt Group International Ltd, responsible for overseeing its strategic direction, key clients and global business expansion. The Meinhardt Group maintains 33 offices worldwide and employs over 3,500 staff, with projects worth an estimated USD 15 billion annually.

Dr Nasim is a structural engineer by profession. He obtained his PhD from Honolulu University and his Master of Engineering from the University of Singapore.

His professional, academic and public sector affiliations include Board Member, Professional Engineers Board, Singapore and Board of Architects, 2006-2008; Board Member, Building & Construction Authority, 2001-2005; Chairman, C21 Best Practice Awards Assessment Committee, 2003; Member of NTU's School of Civil & Structural Engineering's Academic Audit Visiting Committee, 1999; Member, Advisory Committee, NTU School of Civil & Structural Engineering 2000-2004; Member, Economic Strategies Committee (Land Use Sub-Committee), Ministry of National Development, Singapore, 2009-2010 and Resource Panelist for the National Development GPC, 1997-1998.

Dr Nasim was awarded the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year - Engineering Award 2012, 'Top Entrepreneur of the Year' by Rotary-ASME Singapore in 2004, and the 'Tamgha-I-Imtiaz' Medal of Excellence by the Government of Pakistan in 2006. He has also contributed to several journal publications and spoken at international conferences.

(From 1 March 2012 to present)



*Mr Ravi Menon*

*Managing Director  
Monetary Authority of Singapore*

Mr Ravi Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, holds a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University and a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in Economics from the NUS.

He had been Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Trade & Industry (2007-2011), leading its work on economic strategy; industrial development; energy policies; research and development; international trade agreements; and regional economic integration. He chaired the APEC Senior Officials Meetings during APEC 2009 in Singapore.

He was also Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Finance (2003-2007), responsible for fiscal policy and government reserves, the preparation of the Annual Budget Statements; and led a review of the investment policy of the Singapore Government Investment Corporation.

A recipient of the Public Administration Medal (Gold), Mr Menon has served on several Boards in various sectors, including Housing and Development Board; Agency for Science, Technology, and Research; National Research Foundation; Deputy Chairman of the Central Provident Fund Board; and Chairman of the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. He was also on DBS Bank's board of directors. On the international front, he is a member of the Financial Stability Board Steering Committee and chairs the International Monetary and Financial Committee Deputies process.

(From 16 July 2007 to 2 April 2011)



*Mr S Chandra Das*

*Managing Director  
NUR Investment & Trading Pte Ltd*

Mr S Chandra Das was a Member of Parliament of the Republic of Singapore from 1980 to 1996. During this period, he served as the Chairman on two Government Parliamentary Committees relating to Defence and Foreign Affairs as well as Finance, Trade and Industry. Mr Das was the Singapore Trade Representative to the USSR from 1970 to 1971 and Chairman of the Trade Development Board from 1983 to 1986. He was Chairman of NTUC Fairprice Co-operative Ltd from August 1993 to September 2005.

He is currently the Managing Director of NUR Investment & Trading Pte Ltd.

Mr Das has been conferred numerous awards, including the President's Medal by the Singapore Australian Business Council in 2000 and Distinguished Service Award (STAR) by the National Trades Union Congress in 2001 and 2005.

He is currently Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Turkey and also serves as Pro-Chancellor in Nanyang Technological University.

Mr Das graduated with an Honours degree in Economics from the University of Singapore in 1965 and holds a Certificate of Education from the former Singapore Teachers' Training College.

(From 2 January 2009 to 1 January 2012)



**Mr Chiang Chie Foo**

*Permanent Secretary  
Prime Minister's Office*

Mr Chiang Chie Foo is Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Singapore. He joined the Administrative Service in 1981 after graduating with a Bachelor of Electronic Engineering (Honours) degree from the University of Western Australia on a Colombo Plan Scholarship. He was subsequently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue his postgraduate studies at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where he obtained a Masters in Public Administration in 1988. Mr Chiang was awarded a Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 1997 and the Meritorious Service Medal in 2007.

Mr Chiang's previous appointments included key positions as Director, Internal Security Department in the Ministry of Home Affairs from 1993 to 1997, and Principal Private Secretary to then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong from 1990 to 1992. He was appointed Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, in 1997, and subsequently Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, from 1999 till 2004. Mr Chiang was appointed Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence in 2004. He was concurrently appointed Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, from December 2005 till August 2011.

(From 13 February 2006 to 14 February 2012)

# MANAGEMENT TEAM

## 1 Professor Tan Tai Yong

*Director, Institute of South Asian Studies;  
and Vice Provost (Student Life), Office of the Provost  
National University of Singapore*

## 2 Mr Johnson Paul

*Senior Associate Director*

## 3 Dr S Narayan

*Head of Research; and  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

## 4 Dr Amitendu Palit

*Head (Partnership & Programmes); and  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

*Professor  
Tan Tai Yong*



1

*Mr Johnson Paul*



2

*Dr S Narayan*



3

*Dr Amitendu  
Palit*



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**Beyonce**  
**- Nameri Eco Park, Assam**

Picture by Hema Kiruppalini, Dec 2011

# VISION

## STUDYING SOUTH ASIA

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The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was established in 2004, with the realisation that Indian and South Asian economies were becoming influential global players. India, in particular, had experienced a decade of phenomenal growth after liberalising its economy in 1991. Economists viewed it as a rising powerhouse, with the potential to take its place among economic giants such as the United States and China.

Relations between Singapore and India accelerated following the official visit of Singapore's then Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, to India in 1994. With Singapore recognising India's economic potential and India having initiated its 'Look East' Policy, both countries embarked on sustained and active economic and political engagement, eventually inking the historic Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in June 2005. This marked the first such agreement India had signed with any country, and Singapore's first with a South Asian economy.

With a view to studying and understanding the dynamic developments in India and South Asia, Singapore's government announced the establishment of a research institute on South Asia, with funding support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). Thus, the creation of ISAS as an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Through ISAS, Singapore closely engages India and its South Asian neighbours in constructive long term research, gaining deeper insights on the political, economic and social developments in the region. ISAS studies the impact of these events to the region and beyond. More importantly, the Institute disseminates its research globally, creating greater awareness and understanding of South Asia.

**JULY**  
**2004**  
**ISAS**  
**ESTABLISHED**

# BIRTH OF THE INSTITUTE

## LAUNCHING A RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON SOUTH ASIA

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ISAS was officially launched in January 2005 by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, Republic of Singapore. Within the year of its launch, ISAS had produced and published substantial research on economic, political and social developments in India and South Asia, setting a steady pace for the years ahead.

The Institute disseminates its research output via two main channels. The first is a set of publications comprising a regular output of *briefs, insights, working papers, special reports, and books*.

The publications are complemented by regular events which serve to communicate and disseminate research. They present the opportunity for active public discourse on South Asian issues. ISAS conferences, lectures, seminars, symposia and workshops provide the fora for South Asian academics and experts on the region to share insights with policymakers, the business community, political elite and civil society.

**27**  
**JANUARY**  
**2005**  
**ISAS**  
**LAUNCHED**

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Within Launch Year

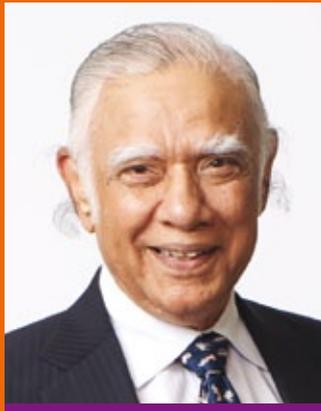
**2 Prime Ministers**  
Delivered Distinguished Visitor  
Lectures

**26**  
Research Papers & Publications

**20**  
Events

# FOUNDING TEAM

## The Board



Ambassador Gopinath Pillai  
*Executive Chairman*  
*Savant Infocomm Pte Ltd*



Professor Tan Chorh Chuan  
*Provost*  
*National University of Singapore*



Associate Professor Tan Tai Yong  
*Dean*  
*Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; and*  
*Acting Director*  
*Institute of South Asian Studies*  
*National University of Singapore*



Professor Lim Chin  
*Acting Dean*  
*School of Business*  
*National University of Singapore*



Mr Heng Swee Keat  
*Permanent Secretary*  
*Ministry of Trade and Industry*



Mr Peter Ho  
*Permanent Secretary*  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



Mr Eddie Teo  
*Permanent Secretary*  
*Prime Minister's Office*

## The Management Team

- Ambassador Gopinath Pillai
- Assoc Prof Tan Tai Yong
- Mr Hernaikh Singh

# MAP OF SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN  
BANGLADESH  
BHUTAN  
INDIA  
MALDIVES  
NEPAL  
PAKISTAN  
SRI LANKA



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## MISSION

ISAS is dedicated to the **study of contemporary South Asia**. It generates knowledge and insights about South Asia and disseminates them in a manner that is useful to policy makers, the business community, academia and civil society.

# THE FOUNDATIONAL YEARS

ISAS has grown by leveraging on several key strategies. These include:

- (a) Establishing strong **research capabilities**
- (b) Disseminating research through **public outreach and programmes**
- (c) **Nurturing young scholars** on South Asia
- (d) Becoming government and industry's **consulting body** on South Asia
- (e) Creating a **global footprint**

## (a) Establishing Strong Research Capabilities

ISAS places great emphasis on the quality and calibre of its research team and scholars, seeking the best talent from a limited pool of international South Asian academics. It regularly identifies prominent experts in the relevant areas of South Asian studies to join or visit the Institute. Through its growing pool of distinguished international scholars, ISAS has established a network of academic alliance across and outside South Asia.

The institute's research talent has grown from 18 in 2007/8 to 23 in 2011/12 reflecting a 27% increase in research talent. Overall, the Institute has grown by 32%. ISAS has maintained a resident research team of 12 and five visiting fellows at any point in time.

ISAS has built a stronger portfolio of Visiting Research Professors from 2009 to 2012 with a gradual reduction in the number of Senior Research Fellows and Visiting Research Fellows. There was a 33% increase in total research staff from 2007/8 to 2008/9.

## (b) Disseminating Research through Public Outreach and Programmes

ISAS employs various means and avenues to engage and reach out to the public to foster greater awareness and understanding of South Asia. Its audience includes South Asians within and outside the region, and those keen to comprehend and appreciate the South Asian political, social and economic milieu.

### • 'South Asia' Newsletter

ISAS has been publishing its newsletter, 'South Asia', regularly since 2005. The newsletter provides regular updates on developments in South Asia, details the Institute's research activities, relates the outcome of events held by ISAS and features occasions when a distinguished personage visits the Institute. The newsletter is readily accessible on the ISAS website.

## Research Capabilities

23

Researchers

5

Research Professors

170

Research Outputs  
(per annum)



• THE FOUNDATIONAL YEARS

In 2009, ISAS published 'South Asian Link' (SAL), a newsletter that focussed on the global South Asian Diaspora. This served to create and facilitate interactions among dispersed diaspora communities and maintain a network of active participants connected via Singapore. The newsletter helps to educate the diaspora of their diversity, identity and experiences in their host countries.

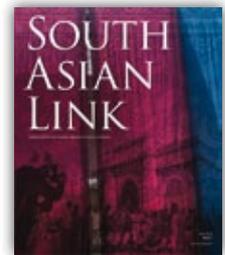
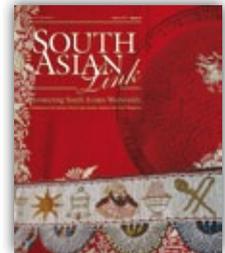
In 2011, South Asia newsletter and SAL were merged into a single publication to reach out to the diaspora community in Singapore and overseas. The revamped South Asia newsletter covers news, developments and features on the diaspora community, while continuing to retain its focus on contemporary South Asian issues.

In May 2012, the South Asia newsletter was supplemented by a South Asian Diaspora website, <http://southasiandiaspora.org>, which disseminates germane news and developments to distant diaspora communities. The South Asia Newsletter and Diaspora website help to position Singapore as a global hub, with ISAS as an effective and excellent knowledge gateway, for global South Asians.

• ISAS Website

The ISAS website, [www.isas.nus.edu.sg](http://www.isas.nus.edu.sg), was launched in 2005. It is a veritable database of ISAS events and publications, including books published by the Institute. It serves as a highly effective channel to disseminate ISAS research, studies and publications to policy makers, the business community, academia and civil society, both locally and internationally. The website is linked to the South Asian Diaspora website.

In March 2012, ISAS website secured a high rank of 10,211 out of 30 million websites as reported by Webstatsdomain. 70 per cent of the visits were from overseas. It has a page rank of 6/10 and an excellent score of 32 per cent for search engine optimisation.



Annual Average

[www.isas.nus.sg](http://www.isas.nus.sg)

7,936

Page Views

2.8 million

Website Hits

1.2 million

Website Visits

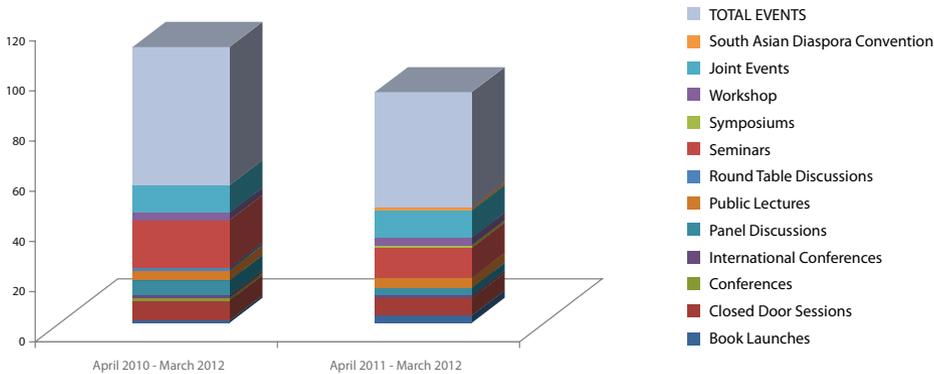
• **South Asian Diaspora Portal**

ISAS online portal, <http://southasiandiaspora.org>, celebrates the diversity of South Asian communities across the world. Managed by ISAS, the site features weekly articles related to business, lifestyle, society, and more. A 'people' category features biographies of prominent South Asians. The portal displays South Asia's travel destinations, interviews and a dedicated photo gallery of South Asian people, places and other areas of interest. The portal serves to create awareness of South Asian Diaspora Conventions and regional gatherings.

• **Events and Media Presence**

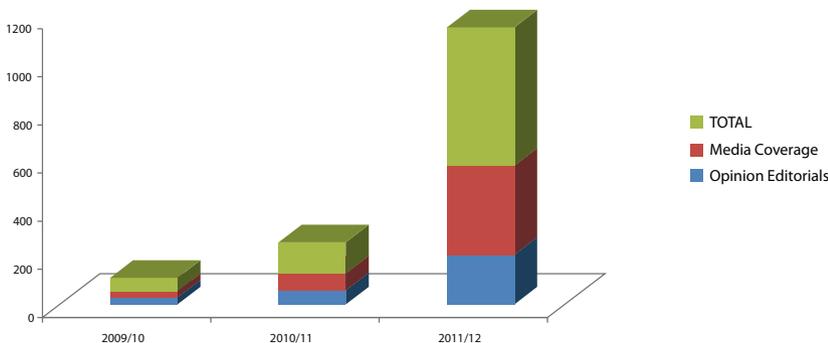
ISAS organises about four events per month and acquires significant mindshare in public media, both print and broadcast.

**EVENTS**



**MEDIA PRESENCE**

(measured by the number of editorials published in public media and citations of ISAS events)



**(c) Programmes for Nurturing Young Scholars on South Asia**

• **ISAS Internship Programme**

ISAS launched its Internship Programme in May 2006 to expand and enhance Singapore’s home-grown pool of scholars and researchers. The programme offers undergraduates and postgraduate students an opportunity to conduct research on South Asia through field trips to the region and working with study committees. Young interns benefit from the programme through their interactions with academia and experts, networking activities and exposure to South Asia. At the end of the programme, the interns submit a research paper on a topic determined by ISAS, and a report on their experience. The ISAS Internship Programme serves to instil deeper awareness and understanding of the region among young Singaporeans and potential scholars of South Asia.

**Interns**

1. Ms Cheah Yik Jin Farah Adam - 2008
2. Ms Yvonne Yap Hui Jun - 2008
3. Ms Jamie Chen Siya - 2008
4. Ms Chua Jialing, Melissa Lorraine - 2008
5. Ms Gurpreet Kaur - 2010
6. Mr Oliver Loke Jia Wen - 2010
7. Ms Esther Nai Xin Yan - 2010

• **Research Associates**

ISAS’ Research Associates (RAs) assist in research projects and programmes. The RAs contribute significantly to research by supporting Visiting Professors in their research projects, conducting literature reviews, collecting and analysing data, and preparing articles, reports and presentations. They develop close and deep working knowledge of South Asian issues.

**(d) Becoming a Consulting Body on South Asia for Government and Industry**

Its setting in Singapore is an advantage. Singapore’s strategic location vis-à-vis South Asia and its status as a regional, communications and financial hub facilitates access to information and resources critical to rigorous research. ISAS is therefore able to provide sound analyses, insights and perspectives of current issues on South Asia.

Singapore is a neutral observer of developments in the region and ISAS is distinctly placed to provide unique and objective research perspectives on South Asia. ISAS is recognised as a research institute publishing insightful works and viewed as an effective and positive intermediary among South Asian nations.

With its high standards of research and analyses, and credible South Asian connections, ISAS has assumed the role of a trusted advisor to resident embassies and corporates in the region.

Internship Programme

2006

Launch of Internship Programme

3-month

Duration

7

Interns

• **Consultations with the Ministry of Trade and Industry on the 2005 Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between India and Singapore**

As part of its research efforts analysing the interface between South Asia and Southeast Asia, the Institute studies the economic and commercial relationship between India and Singapore. In collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), the Institute focuses on detailed studies of India-Singapore trade relations, the impact of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) on bilateral trade, and movement of specific commodities such as petroleum and energy products. ISAS also compares Singapore's trade with India with respect to its trade with China, Japan and South Korea. ISAS researchers have embarked on a joint research initiative with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for evaluating the bilateral CECA and the prospects of bilateral trade in services between India and Singapore.

• **Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Papers**

ISAS research papers and briefing notes are a useful and constant source of information for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to gain better insights and knowledge of South Asian countries. These include studies relating to the political trends and economic reforms in India, the Maoist insurgency, and developments in Pakistan.

Two ISAS reports deserve special mention. The first is the series of workshops on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), published as a report in 2010, on the various aspects of SAARC including the political significance of its expansion to include external observers like China and the United States. The second is the ISAS Special Report submitted as an informal input to the ASEAN/India Eminent Persons Group meeting in Kuala Lumpur in March 2012 on the future directions of ASEAN-India relations.

• **Pre-Posting Briefing for Government Officers**

ISAS research fellows are regularly invited to brief MFA and MTI officers on South Asian issues. Some of the issues discussed include the Indian State elections, the situation in the northeast region of India, Centre-State relations, and the security situation in Afghanistan.

• **Briefing Foreign Officials**

High profile local and international institutions, as well as highly ranked American, Australian and European officials and delegates, regularly call on and consult ISAS for advice and briefings pertaining to South Asian trade, commerce, economics, political and security issues.

• **Engagement with the MFA Academy**

Since 2010, ISAS has been collaborating with the MFA Diplomatic Academy to conduct the 'Understanding India Course' for young foreign service officers. The course provides core knowledge of India's civilisation and its contemporary history, political and economic trends, as well as its strategic outlook and relations with major powers.

• **Extensive Outreach Programme**

Through its Distinguished Visitors programme and Special Lecture series, ISAS has been inviting political leaders and young politicians from the South Asian region to visit Singapore. These have provided further opportunities for their engagement with Singapore leaders and business elite. The distinguished visitors include: H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Republic of Sri Lanka; Indian External Affairs Minister S M Krishna; Mrs Sushma Swaraj, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, India; H.E. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Islamic Republic of Pakistan; and H.E. Prime Minister Mrs Begum Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh.

• **Visits by Singapore Cabinet Ministers**

**Mr George Yeo**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs (2004 – 2011)

**Mr K Shanmugam**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law

**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance

**Mr Heng Swee Keat**  
Minister for Education

**(e) Creating a Global Footprint**

S/N	Research Partners without MOUs
1.	Griffith University, Australia
2.	Australia-India Institute, Australia
3.	Lowy Institute, Australia
4.	Academic Diplomatie Internationale (ADI), France
5.	Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India
6.	Singapore Business Federation, Singapore
7.	Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore
8.	East Asian Institute (EAI), Singapore
9.	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore
10.	Middle East Institute (MEI) Singapore
11.	Asia Research Institute (ARI), Singapore
12.	Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), Singapore



With its rising profile as a reputable research institute on South Asia, other local and international organisations keen to tap into its research strengths and extensive networks, have sought formal collaborations with ISAS.

### Summary of MOUs and Partnerships

S/N	MOUs Signed	Date Signed
1.	Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, India	July 2004
2.	Peace Study Group, Department of History, University of Calcutta, India	26 November 2005
3.	Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan	6 February 2006
4.	International Relations and Security Network (ISN – Geneva), Switzerland	24 August 2006
5.	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi, India (ICRIER), India	29 August 2006
6.	Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, India	1 January 2007
7.	Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab, India	20 March 2007
8.	Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)	7 December 2007
9.	University of Mumbai (Dept of Economics), India	17 July 2008
10.	Aspen Institute India, India	16 December 2009
11.	Standard Chartered Bank, Singapore	3 May 2010
12.	The India China America (ICA) Institute, United States	1 September 2010
13.	Observer Research Foundation, India	1 September 2010
14.	The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) – Bangalore, India	7 February 2011
15.	Centre for South Asian Studies, Institute of International Studies Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China	28 March 2011
16.	Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), Bangladesh	2 December 2011

• Network of Partners



**SOUTH ASIA**

1. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), India  
*5 strategic dialogues (since 2008)*
2. Federation of Indian Industries (FICCI),  
*1 review project (2012)*
3. IIM Bangalore, India  
*1 research initiative (2011)*
4. Aspen Institute, India  
*1 symposium (2012)*
5. Athena Infonomics, India  
*1 conference (2012)*

**UNITED STATES**



1. India-China-America Institute (ICA), US  
*1 research project (2012)*
2. Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut  
*1 workshop (2012)*
3. Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation New York, UN  
*1 workshop (2012)*

**CHINA**



1. Institute of International Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai  
*2 workshops (2011)*

**SINGAPORE**



1. Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
*8 joint events (since 2008)*  
*2 lectures (2008 & 2010)*
2. Standard Chartered Bank, Singapore  
*1 distinguished lecture (2012)*
3. East Asian Institute (EAI)  
*4 workshops (since 2008)*  
*1 conference (2008)*
4. Middle East Institute (MEI)  
*1 workshop (2011)*
5. Asia Research Institute (ARI)  
*1 workshop (2012)*
6. Singapore Business Federation (SBF)  
*1 conference (2012)*

**EUROPE**



1. Academic Diplomatique Internationale (ADI), Aga Khan Development Network, France  
*1 workshop (2011)*

**AUSTRALIA**



1. Australia-India Institute, Melbourne  
*1 workshop (2010)*
2. University of Sydney  
*1 workshop (2011)*
3. Lowy Institute, Sydney  
*1 workshop (2011)*
5. Griffith University, Queensland  
*1 workshop & joint publication (2011)*
6. Crawford School, ANU, Canberra  
*1 workshop (2011)*



“ISAS is a truly unique institution connecting South Asia and Singapore and, within this framework, ISAS is doing pioneering work in deepening Singapore-India partnership. In a short span of a few years, ISAS has built a high level of credibility and global respect.”

**Mr Tarun Das**  
*Founding Chief Mentor, Confederation of Indian Industry; and  
 Founding Trustee, Aspen Institute of India*

# CREATING THE IMPACT

ISAS' efforts to bridge South Asia with Singapore and the region have led to constructive exchanges between the relevant parties. The successful initiatives by ISAS to improve understanding and collaboration between the respective countries include:

- (a) Engaging India
- (b) Facilitating Dialogue between South Asia and Singapore
- (c) Scholarship
- (d) Linking the South Asian Diaspora

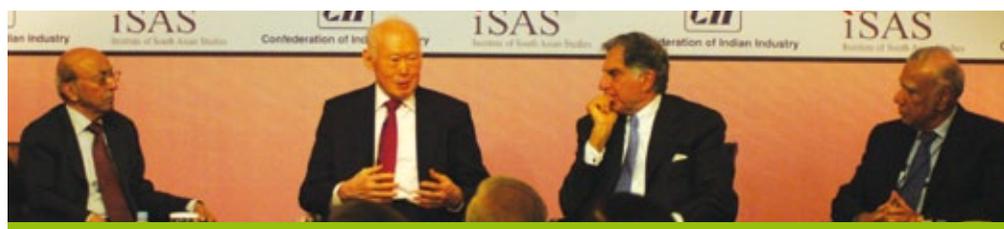
## (a) Engaging India

With historical links spanning several centuries, Singapore and India's strategic and economic interests converged again in the 1990s, particularly with India's economic liberalisation and 'Look East Policy', and Singapore's move to drive its economy with the two emerging growth engines of the time, India and China. Singapore's then Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, was instrumental in forging strategic alliances with India to complement and leverage on the respective strengths of both nations. Mr Goh had famously tried to infect Singapore with 'India Fever' after his first visit as Prime Minister in 1994. This paved the way for sustained engagement between the two countries.

To facilitate further regular and structured engagements with India, ISAS launched the inaugural India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue (ISSD) in 2008. ISSD is an annual commitment between India and Singapore to meet and better understand their respective views and positions on the global political, security and economic landscape, and to discuss regional security issues. Both countries explore new areas of cooperation at the bilateral, regional and global levels at these fora.

In further strengthening India-Singapore bilateral ties, ISAS and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) jointly organised the Singapore Symposium in New Delhi on 16 December 2009. Infrastructure, education and governance were key themes at the symposium attended by leaders of Indian industry, business, strategic and diplomatic communities, private and public sectors, as well as academic experts and the media.

The event highlighted areas for long term collaboration between Singapore and India with regard to Singapore's expertise, India's developmental priorities and the shared concerns of the two countries. India's Minister of Human Resource Development, Mr Kapil Sibal, and India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr Anand Sharma, delivered keynote addresses. The Symposium's high point was a dialogue session with Singapore's Minister Mentor, Lee Kuan Yew, which was moderated by Mr Ratan Tata, Chairman of Tata Group, India.



**(b) Facilitating Dialogue between South Asia and Singapore**

ISAS has instituted a key initiative in drawing South Asian leaders, particularly Ministers, senior civil servants, and other prominent individuals, into discussions for deeper insights into developments within South Asian nations. Such meetings have established excellent links between Singapore and South Asian leaders, opened more channels for better communication and instilled confidence in each other. The following are significant highlights since ISAS' inception:

32

• **Strategic Conversations**

*(Closed Door Discussions)*

Closed Door Dialogue with H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Republic of Sri Lanka  
16 February 2012

Discussion with Mrs Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi, India  
5 October 2011

Political Developments in India: BJP's Vision and Agenda  
Mrs Sushma Swaraj, Member of Parliament and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Republic of India  
15 September 2011

A Roundtable with The Foreign Minister of Pakistan  
H.E. Mr Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
23 November 2010

Closed Door Discussion on Two Decades of Look East Policy  
H.E. Mr S M Krishna, External Affairs Minister, Government of India  
27 October 2010

The Political Significance of the Indo-US Nuclear Agreement  
H.E. Dr S Jaishankar, India's High Commissioner to Singapore  
3 August 2007

Dialogue with Mr Rahul Gandhi, Member of Lok Sabha, Republic of India  
Hosted by ISAS and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy  
9 June 2006



*(Roundtable Discussions)*

**Nepal's Political and Economic Transformation: Challenges and Prospects**

Mr Binod Chaudhary, Member of Parliament and Constituent Assembly; and President and Managing Director, Chaudhary Group, Nepal

16 October 2008

**Changing South Asian Security Landscape: Implications for the Region and the World**

General (R) Jehangir Karamat, Former Chief of Staff, Pakistan Army, and Former Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States

3 June 2008

• **Distinguished Lectures**

*(Distinguished Visitor Lectures)*

**Second ISAS Distinguished Visitor Lecture**

Promoting an Environment for Security and Cooperation in Asia  
H.E. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

11 May 2005

**First ISAS Distinguished Visitor Lecture**

Bangladesh: Challenges and Priorities  
H.E. Mrs Begum Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh

22 March 2005

*(Public Lectures)*

**India's External Environment and Current Foreign Policy Challenges**

H.E. Mr S M Krishna, Minister for External Affairs, Government of India

9 March 2012

**The Current Situation in Sri Lanka and The Way Forward**

H.E. Professor G L Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, Republic of Sri Lanka

19 May 2011

**Is Asia Becoming a Militarised Region: Implications for Regional Security**

Ambassador Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs; and Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India

11 March 2011

**Afghan Conflict: External-Internal Dimensions**

Dr Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman, Afghanistan National Alliance for Hope and Change; and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

14 February 2011



**Higher Education in India: Opportunities and Prospects**

H.E. Mr Kapil Sibal, Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India  
15 April 2010

**The Future of Indian Politics – A Communist Party of India (Marxist) Perspective**

Mr Sitaram Yechury, Communist Party of India (Marxist) Politburo Member, and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Republic of India  
27 June 2007

**India's Foreign Policy Priorities**

H.E. Mr Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs, Government of India  
20 June 2007

**Sri Lanka: A Safe Destination for Business**

H.E. Mr Rohitha Bogollagama, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Sri Lanka  
1 June 2007

**Internationalisation of Indian Businesses**

Mr Ratan Tata, Chairman, The Tata Group, India  
6 April 2005

*(ISAS Workshops)*

**Afghanistan in Transition: Beyond 2014?**

Dr Lim Wee Kiak, Member of Parliament; and Chairman, Government Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore  
9 - 10 January 2012

**The Encyclopedia of The Sri Lankan Diaspora**

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Minister for Finance, Republic of Singapore  
17 June 2010

**Islam In Modern South Asia: Culture, Communications and Commerce**

Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Former Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore  
27 - 28 September 2011

**Celling South Asia: The Mobile Phone's Impact on a Region**

Multiple speakers  
17 - 18 February 2011



• **Annual Conferences**

**Seventh International Conference on South Asia**

South Asia and Southeast Asia Engagements: Realities and Opportunities

Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, Republic of Singapore

23 November 2011 - 24 November 2011

**Sixth International Conference on South Asia**

South Asia in the New Decade: Challenges and Prospects

Keynote Speaker: Mr Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Republic of Singapore

11 November 2010 - 12 November 2010

**Fifth International Conference on South Asia**

South Asia: Beyond the Global Financial Crisis

Keynote Speaker: Mr K. Shanmugam, Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Republic of Singapore

4 November 2009

**Fourth ISAS International Conference on South Asia**

Challenges of Economic Growth, Inequality and Conflict in South Asia

Keynote Speaker: Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Minister for Finance, Republic of Singapore

24 November 2008

**Third ISAS International Conference on South Asia**

Socio-Political and Economic Challenges for South Asia

Keynote Speaker: Mr Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade and Industry, Republic of Singapore

25 October 2007

**Second ISAS International Conference on South Asia**

South Asia in the Global Community: Towards Greater Collaboration and Cooperation

Keynote Speaker: Mr George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore

8 November 2006

**Inaugural ISAS International Conference on South Asia**

Engaging South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

Keynote Speaker: Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Republic of Singapore

28 January 2005



• **Ambassador Series**

Canada's Changing Asian Priorities

H.E. David Seigny, High Commissioner of Canada to Singapore  
18 April 2012

Asia and the Non-Proliferation Treaty

H.E. Mr Olivier Caron, French Ambassador to Singapore  
30 January 2012

Looking East in India's Foreign Policy: General Reflections

H.E. Dr T.C.A. Raghavan, High Commissioner of India to Singapore  
2 December 2011

Australia-South Asia Relations

H.E. Mr Doug Chester, Australia's Ambassador to Singapore  
29 November 2011

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011: Current Objectives and its Place in UK Policy Making

H.E. Ambassador Antony Philipson, British High Commissioner to Singapore  
16 November 2011

Pakistan-China Relations: Shaping the 21st Century Together

H.E. Ambassador Syed Hasan Javed, Pakistan High Commissioner to Singapore  
20 September 2011

The Politics of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia: An Outsider's Observation

H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Singapore  
24 August 2011

Japan-South Asia Relations with Emphasis on Trade

H.E. Ambassador Yoichi Suzuki, Embassy of Japan in Singapore  
28 July 2011



**(c) Scholarship**

Since its establishment, ISAS has produced regular and well received outputs, noted for integrating views from different perspectives arising from its scholars' interactions with Singaporeans and other South Asians at ISAS.

**Book Launches**



Book Launch cum Public Lecture on *'The Politics of Religion: South and Southeast Asia'*, 26 September 2011. Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed, Honorary Senior Fellow, ISAS and editor of the book (R), presenting a copy of the volume to Professor Tan Tai Yong, Director, ISAS.



Book Launch cum Panel Discussion on *'South Asia in the New World Order: The Role for Regional Cooperation'*, 23 August 2011. Mr Shahid Javed Burki, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS (L), presenting a copy of his book to Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, Chairman, ISAS.



Book launch of *'More than Maoism: Politics, Policies and Insurgencies in South Asia'* by H.E. Mr Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Rural Development; and Drinking Water & Sanitation, Government of India (R), 22 February 2012, New Delhi. Next to him is co-editor of the book Professor Robin Jeffrey.



Book launch of *'A Resurgent China: South Asian Perspective'* by Vice President of India, H.E. Mr M Hamid Ansari (third from left), 23 April 2012, in New Delhi. (L-R): Professor S D Muni, co-editor of the book, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, Chairman of ISAS and Professor Tan Tai Yong, co-editor and Director of ISAS.

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## Top Reads with Reviews

### Emeritus Professor Riaz Hassan

#### Life as a Weapon: The Global Rise of Suicide Bombings (Routledge)

- 'To help us better understand suicide bombings, Professor Riaz Hassan, one of the world's leading sociologists, has brought together a wealth of knowledge on suicide, religion and the state, terrorism, politics and social conditions. This masterful analysis takes us through two thousand years of history, and in recent decades across a wide geographical spread – from Sri Lanka to Chechnya, from Israel to Iraq, from Turkey to Pakistan and many places in between.' – Adam Graycar, Professor, Rutgers University, USA
- 'This is a marvelous book by an extraordinary and courageous scholar. Throughout *Life as a Weapon* Professor Hassan challenges a number of taboos and if his data lead him that way he is ready to take politically incorrect positions. After the 9/11 tragedy (and the horror of suicide attacks wherever they occur) it is next to impossible for scholars in the West to take an objective view about who suicide bombers are, what their real motivation is, and how suicide bombing compares ethically with other acts of war.' – Ivan Szelenyi, William Graham Sumner Professor of Sociology and Professor of Political Science, Yale University, USA

### Professor Robin Jeffrey/ Dr Ronojoy Sen/ Pratima Singh

#### More than Maoism (Manohar Publishers)

- 'It is one of the best books published in recent years on the Maoist movement in the country. The Institute of South Asian Studies of the National University of Singapore is to be complimented for it. The editors — Robin Jeffrey, Ronojoy Sen and Pratima Singh — have done a good job.' – Prakash Singh, Daily Pioneer, former BSF DGP, and expert on Maoism
- '... the Indian Maoist movement is turning out to be a challenge to comprehend. Mostly, attempts to understand the revolutionary movement have projected a one-sided view. It was sought to be analysed from different viewpoints like militarist, ideological, sociological, economical, etc. The Institute of South Asian Studies has now succeeded in filling the gap by bringing out this book' – K Srinivas Reddy, The Hindu

### Dr Nalin Mehta

#### a. **Sellotape Legacy: Delhi and the Commonwealth Games** (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2010), with Boria Majumdar

- 'Blazing expose .... thorough, well-researched, sober and absorbingly well-written' – Mani Shankar Aiyer, Former Indian Cabinet Minister, *Outlook*, 4 October 2010
- 'the definitive word on the contentious event', *India Today*, 27 September 2010
- 'the best analysis of any Games organisation to date... should be mandatory reading...' – *Biblio: A Review of Books*, September-October 2010

- b. **Gujarat Beyond Gandhi: Politics, Identity, Society, Conflict** (London: Routledge, 2011; first edition, New Delhi, Routledge, 2010), edited with Mona G. Mehta
- ‘answers the question [about Gujarat] insightfully and comprehensively...helps us to understand... better by dissecting the various dimensions of contemporary Gujarat...’ -- *Frontline*, November. 5-18, 2011
  - ‘provides much-needed insights into the dominant impulses of identity formation, cultural change, political mobilisation, religious movements and modes of communication that define modern Gujarat.’ -- Press Trust of India, 4 July 2010
  - ‘touches upon a fascinating range of topics ...providing new insights into understanding the enigma of Gujarat’, *Indian Express*, 3 July 2011
- c. A revised edition of ***Olympics: The India Story*** (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2012; first published 2008), with Boria Majumdar
- ‘pathbreaking book...a landmark.. overall an indispensable record’, *The Week*, 8 July 2012
  - ‘The scholastic nature of the book is its added charm... it also captures the politics of sport and the role it plays in international diplomacy...A big bag of facts, interesting anecdotes and a portrayal of history in the making – that is what makes this book a must have.’, *The Sunday Post*, July 1, 2012
  - ‘It is a more exhaustive coverage of India’s Olympic journey along with a lot of history associated with the participation of the contingent over the years.’, *Business Standard*, 14 July 2012

### Dr Md Mizanur Rahman

Md Mizanur Rahman and Danièle Bélanger. 2012. ‘**Gendered Use of Remittances: The Case of Rural Bangladesh**’, in Ibrahim Sirkeci, Jeffrey Cohen and Dilip Ratha (editors), *Migration and Remittances during the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*, Washington DC, World Bank.

‘There were fears that the 2008-09 global recession would result in the widespread return of migrants and declining remittances to developing countries. These fears were not realized and this important book explains why. The contributors to this book include leading experts on migration and its effects in developing countries, making the book of lasting value.’ - Philip L. Martin, Professor and Chair, Comparative Immigration & Integration Program, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of California, Davis.

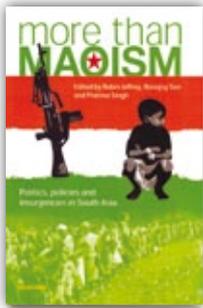
### Dr Ronojoy Sen

‘**In the Name of God**’ published in *South Asia* 33/1 (2010) was the third most downloaded of the journal’s published articles in 2011 and it was downloaded 100 times.

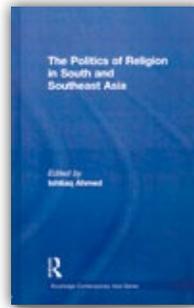
### Dr Sinderpal Singh

Sinderpal Singh’s article, ‘**From Delhi to Bandung**’, was the most downloaded article in 2011 for the journal *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*

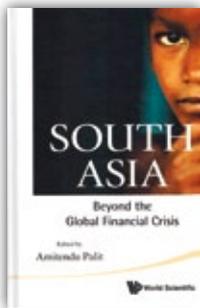
• Selected Books



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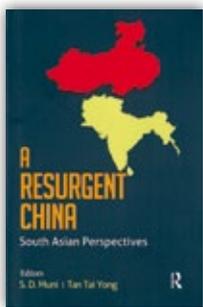
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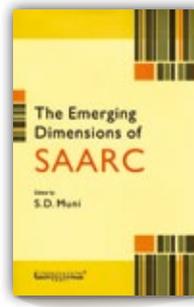
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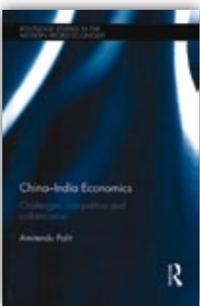
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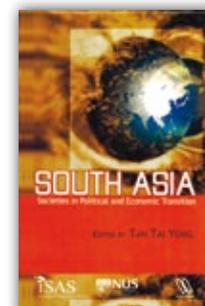
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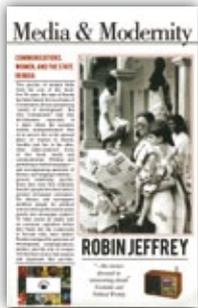


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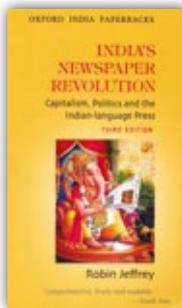
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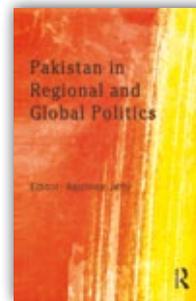
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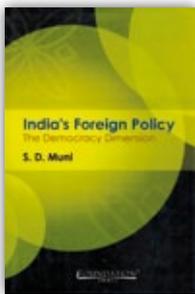
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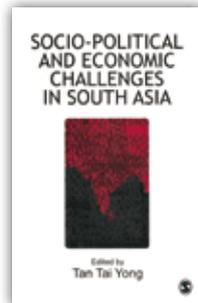
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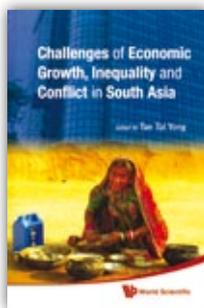
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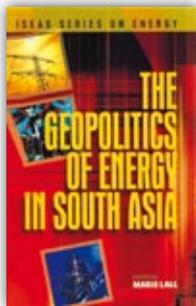
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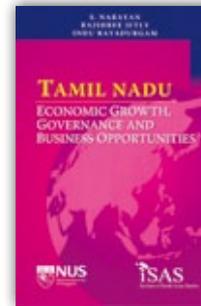
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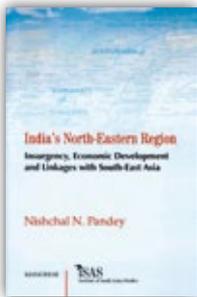
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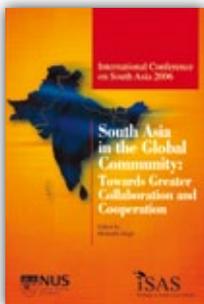
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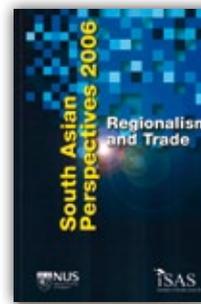
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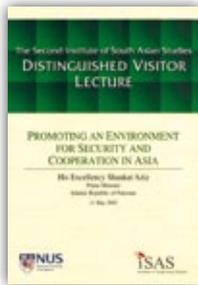
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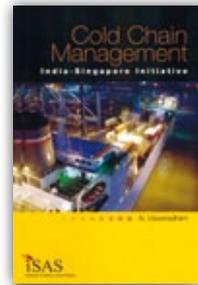
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• Selected Books



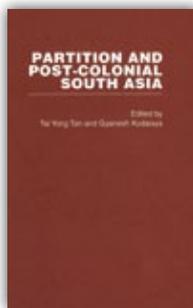
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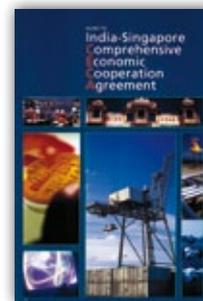
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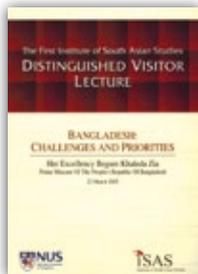
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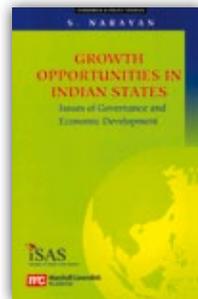
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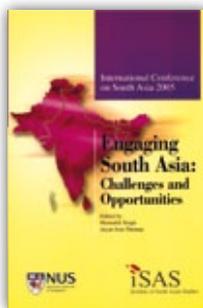
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- 3 Harris, John. 'Drivers of development over the next 30 years: Some speculations.' *Journal of International Development*, Volume 21, Issue 6, August 2009
- 4 Palit, Amitendu. 'Growth of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India Issues and Perspectives.' *Journal of Infrastructure Development* 1.2, 2009.
- 5 Sahoo, Dukhabandhu, and K. Mathiyazhagan Maathai. 'Impact of Foreign Direct Investment Inflows in Major Sectors in the Indian Economy.' *The World Economy*, 32(12), 2008.
- 6 Mathiyazhagan, Maathai K. 'Determinants of Cost Efficiency of Public and Private Hospitals of Karnataka State in India.' *Journal of Quantitative Economics*, 5(2), 2007.

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- 1 Singh, Sinderpal. 'From Delhi to Bandung: Nehru, Indian-ness and Pan-Asian-ness.' *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol 34(1), 2011.
- 2 Singh, Sinderpal and Rahman Syeda Sana. 'India-Singapore Relations: Constructing a New Bilateral Relationship.' *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Volume 32 (1), April 2010.
- 3 D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. 'Afghanistan in South Asia: Regional Cooperation or Competition?' *South Asian Survey*, Volume 16, No. 1, 2009.
- 4 Yong, Tan Tai and See Chak Mun. 'The Evolution of India-ASEAN Relations.' *India Review – Special Issue*, Volume 8, No. 1, January-March 2009.
- 5 Karmakar, Suparna. 'Developing Countries in the 21st Century WTO: New Contours of India's Global Engagement.' *The Law and Development Review*, Volume 2: ISS. 1, Article 1, January 2009.
- 6 Lodhi, A Iftikhar A. 'India-US Strategic Partnership, the Asian Balance of Power, and the Greater Middle East.' *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Volume 3, No. 4, October-December 2008.
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- 2 D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. 'Media and Counter terrorism: The Indian Experience.' *Strategic Analysis*, Volume 33, No. 5, September 2009.
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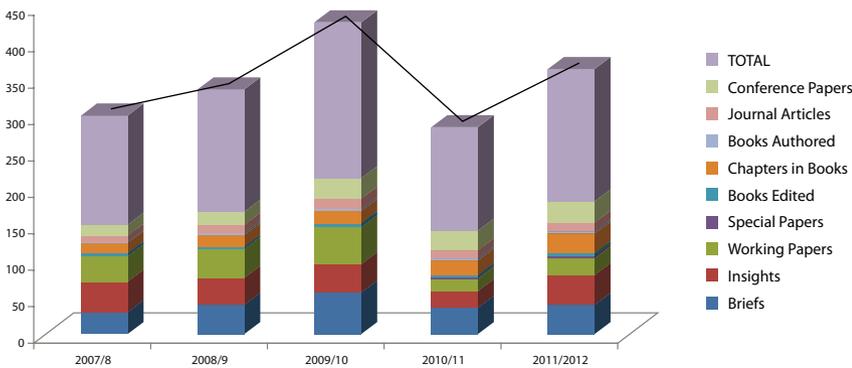
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- 2 Rahman, Md Mizanur. 'Bangladeshi Migrants in the UAE: Gender Differentiated Patterns of Migration Experiences.' *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 47, No. 2, March 2011.
- 3 Rahman, Md Mizanur and Kiong Tong Chee. 'Integration of New Immigrants in Singapore: A Transnational Inclusion Approach.' *Asian Ethnicity*, February 2011.
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- 6 Rahman, Md Mizanur. 'Remittance as a Social Process: the Singapore-Bangladesh remittance corridor.' *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, Volume 19, No.2, 2010.
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- 3 Muni, Sukh Deo. 'The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Nepal: Democracy in the Margins.' *Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series*, Vol 84, June 2011.
- 4 Harriss, John. 'What is going on in India's 'red corridor'? Questions about India's Maoist insurgency.' *Pacific Affairs*, Volume 84, Number 2, June 2011.
- 5 Sen, Ronojoy. 'In the Name of God: Regulating Religion in Indian Elections.' *South Asia*, April 2010.
- 6 Harriss, John. 'Participation and Contestation in the Governance of Indian Cities.' *Simons Papers in Security and Development* 3, 2010.
- 7 Hassan, Riaz. 'Religious Institutions and Political Order: A Comparative Study of Muslim Countries.' *Australian Religion Studies Review* 24.1, 2010.
- 8 D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. 'Countering the Naxalites: Is there a need to 'bring in' the Army?' *Journal of Defence Studies*, July 2009.
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- 12 Harriss, John. 'Bringing Politics Back into Poverty Analysis.' *Poverty Dynamics: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2009
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## Research Outputs

Research outputs have steadily increased by 12% in 2008/9, 27% in 2009/10 and 28% in 2011/12. The number of published outputs per month has doubled from 3.6 publications per month in 2007/8 to 6.3 in 2011/12.



	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Briefs	30	40	57	36	40
Insights	42	37	39	23	41
Working Papers	35	40	51	17	23
Special Papers	0	0	0	2	3
Books Edited	4	3	5	3	4
Chapters in Books	14	16	17	20	27
Books Authored	2	3	3	3	3
Journal Articles	8	11	14	11	12
Conference Papers	15	18	28	27	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>182</b>

## Grants Secured

### Dr Amitendu Palit

Head Partnerships and Programmes,  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow

Dr Palit was awarded a research grant of SGD 6,000 from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. The grant was expended on research related to the subject of China-India comparative economic dimensions. Dr Palit attended an academic conference to present his findings on the subject and undertook fieldwork to obtain primary inputs useful to his research.

**Dr Iftekhar Chowdhury**

Head, Multilateral and International Linkages  
*Senior Research Fellow*

Dr Chowdhury was awarded a research grant of USD 30,000 for a study on multilateral institutions and their linkages with South Asia. The grant was utilised for the designated purpose which included fieldwork in New York and South Asia. The grant was awarded by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

**Professor Tan Tai Yong**

Director; and

**Dr Mizanur Rahman**

*Research Fellow*

Professor Tan Tai Yong and Dr Mizanur Rahman have secured SGD 197,000 from the grant afforded by the Humanities and Science Division, NUS, for a research project entitled 'South Asian Diaspora engagement with South Asia'. The duration of the project is three years from April 2012 to March 2015.

**(e) Linking the South Asian Diaspora**

**South Asian Diaspora Convention 2011, 21 to 22 July**

The inaugural South Asian Diaspora Convention (SADC) held on 21 and 22 July 2011 attracted more than 1,000 participants from all over the world. The convention gathered a distinguished array of South Asians and international guests to discuss key issues and engage with the South Asian Diaspora.

The occasion assembled top dignitaries from Singapore, with the strong participation and support of several government and private agencies. Its impact and significance was reflected in the extensive press coverage garnered both locally and in the international media. Delegates gained fresh perspectives, and established new connections during the two days of discussions and dialogue.

SADC 2011 projected Singapore as a 'springboard' for South Asia and a global platform for people of South Asian origins and those with an interest in South Asia to collaborate and network. It also established ISAS as a leading think-tank on South Asian issues, capable of staging large-scale international events that engaged the global South Asian network. The next SADC conference will take place from 21 to 23 November 2013 at Suntec City, Singapore.

**South Asian  
Diaspora  
Convention**



**1100**

**Participants**

**7**

**Plenary Sessions**

**23**

**Key Speakers**



# RESEARCH CLUSTER LEADERS

## Dr S Narayan

*Head (Research); and  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

Dr Narayan's areas of focus are the developments in the economies of South Asia with particular emphasis on India. Developments in the financial markets, public policy on fiscal management, monetary and currency rate policies would remain his primary areas of work. He would also focus on risk analyses for doing business in India, with a sectoral study of some selected sectors. Energy security and its relationship to growth are expected to be a primary area of research. Along with Prof Harriss, he will launch a study entitled 'Social Change Development and Politics in India' to determine implications of development for changes in social behaviour. He would also be writing a paper on public private partnerships models in water, waste management and skill development to suggest feasible alternatives.



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**Economics and Trade Policy:** With globalisation, South Asia has had to increasingly integrate with the world economy. But it is challenging as there are constraints on the region's ability to integrate fully with the global trade and finance architecture. These are due to underlying reasons, ranging from restrictive external trade policies to inefficient domestic trade regulations. To compound that, each country has its peculiar historical, socio-economic issues to manage.

This cluster looks into the issues affecting the region's economic growth and development. It examines various economic and trade policy alternatives and analyses their impact on the region and the specific countries.

## Mr Shahid Javed Burki

*Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

Shahid Javed Burki simultaneously holds a number of institutional appointments. After retiring from the World Bank where he was Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean, he joined the Washington based Woodrow Wilson Institute for International Scholars and remains an Honorary Fellow. He is also the Honorary Chairman of the Lahore-based Institute of Public Policy. He has written on development issues concerning China, Cuba, Latin America and South Asia. He also contributes regular columns for a number of newspaper including Singapore's Business Times, India's Business Standard and Pakistan's Dawn and Express Tribune. Last year, his book on South Asian economic integration was published by Routledge, London and was written under the auspices of ISAS. He is currently working on two books respectively on Pakistan and South Asia.



**South Asia and Economic Change:** The cluster has the responsibility for thinking beyond the individual states of South Asia, reflecting on their position in the wider world. Regional economic integration involving the countries in the sub-continent is of particular interest for the members of the cluster. Last year the cluster head published a book entitled 'South Asia in the

New World Order – The role of Regional Cooperation'. The cluster is working on a research project on how the American departure from Afghanistan in 2014 will affect the war-torn country as well as South Asia.

## Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury

*Senior Research Fellow*

Dr Chowdhury's research outputs have covered all eight SAARC countries and Myanmar, and have also related to thematic issues such as South Asia's contribution to setting global norms and standards in disarmament and non-proliferation, peace-keeping, combating terrorism and analyses of inter and intra-state relations in the region. His future research will continue in this direction. He organised a symposium on the UN last year, and recently a Workshop on Counterterrorism in South Asia in partnership with the Washington/New York based Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation and the UN. He conducts the 'Ambassadors' Lecture Series' at ISAS.

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**Multilateral and International Linkages:** The cluster has published over four book chapters, more than 50 Working papers, Insights and Briefs, and a number of other publications on issues within its remit. A compilation in the form of a book is planned. Also on the cards is a book 'Afghanistan after America' which will be co-authored by Dr Chowdhury.

The Cluster has been collaborating with the United Nations and the New York/Washington based Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation resulting in two workshops this year (more to follow) on the implementation of the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy in South Asia.

The cluster runs an important set of events in the form of its 'Ambassadors' Lecture Series'. To date 10 Ambassadors have spoken.

Eight 'Distinguished Persons' including a Nobel Laureate, have delivered talks at ISAS.

## Professor Robin Jeffrey

Visiting Research Professor

In the past 18 months, Robin Jeffrey had a primary research focus on telecommunications in India, particularly the mobile phone. A 90-000-word monograph, entitled 'The Great Indian Phone Book', co-written with Assa Doron of the Australian National University, was sent to the publisher (C. Hurst, with Hachette in India and Harvard University Press in North America) in April 2012. He co-edited 'More Than Maoism', a 490-page collection including contributions from nine ISAS members and based on workshops held at ISAS in 2010. It was published in February 2012 by Manohar of New Delhi for ISAS and released in New Delhi by the Indian Minister, Jairam Ramesh. Jeffrey gave the annual Editors' Guild of India lecture in New Delhi in March on 'Media in India: history, prospects, challenges'.



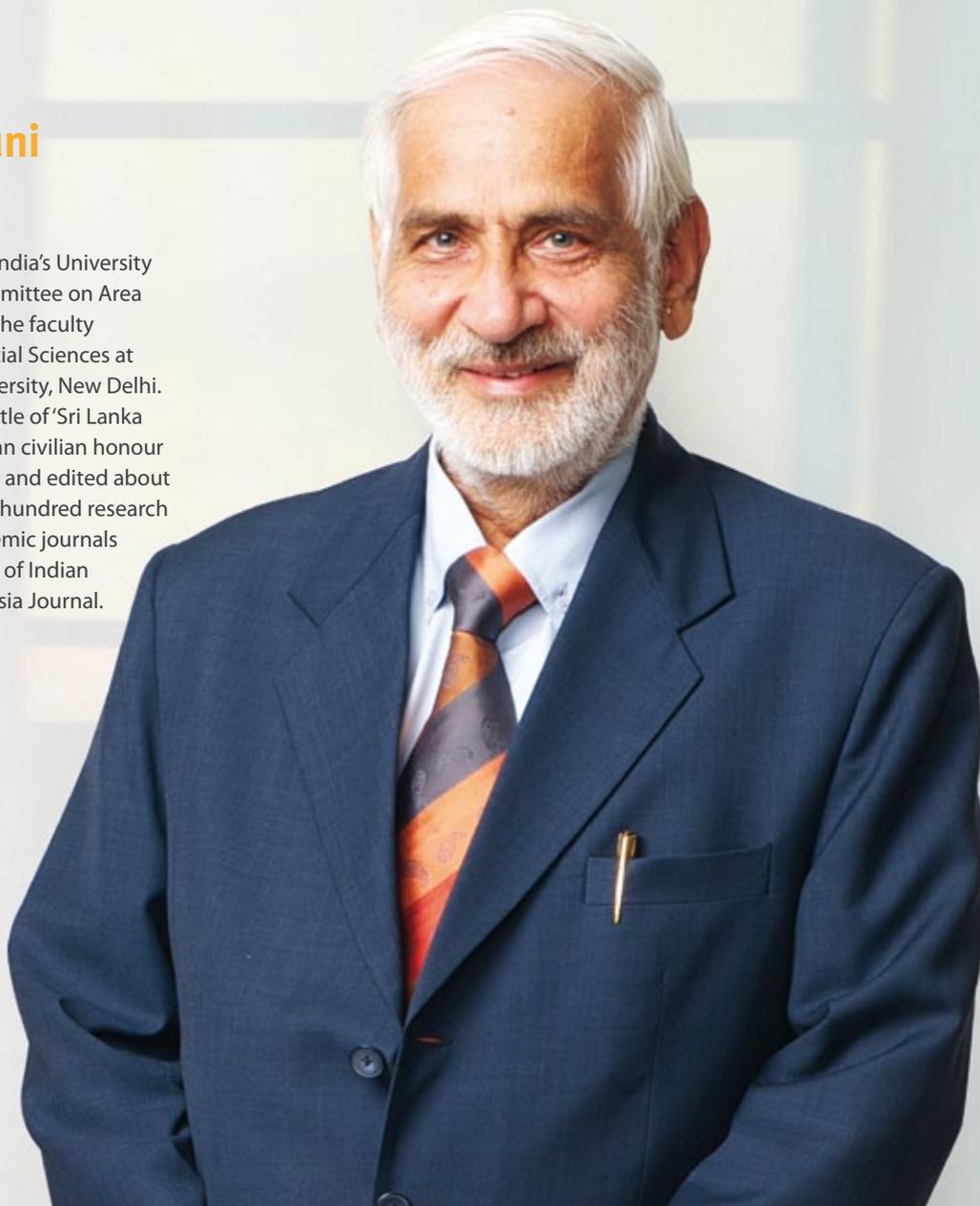
**Politics and Governance:** The cluster consists of a core group of four researchers and draws on other members of ISAS for advice and support. The core group meets at least once a week to discuss the progress of projects and the organisation of events. Research topics emerge from these discussions and the weekly Chairman's message of the Institute. Projects often begin with a seminar or workshop which allows ISAS to gauge interest in a particular theme and the extent of existing research. If indicators are favourable, the cluster works to extend and publish findings of the workshop. This has been done in the case of the book *More than Maoism* and the special issue of the journal *Pacific Affairs* entitled 'Celling

South Asia: the Mobile Phone's Impact on a Region'. Similar projects are in progress on the themes of 'Being Muslim in South Asia' and 'Mughals, Mandarins and Messengers: Media at Work in China and India'. The cluster conducts 'Novel Approaches to Politics in South Asia', a series which presents outstanding writers from the region who discuss their political environment and their work.

## Professor S D Muni

*Visiting Research Professor*

Professor S D Muni is a member of India's University Grants Commission's Standing Committee on Area Studies and a Visitor's nominee on the faculty selection board in the school of Social Sciences at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. Professor Muni was bestowed the title of 'Sri Lanka Ratna' in 2005, the highest Sri Lankan civilian honour for a non-national. He has authored and edited about two dozen books, published over a hundred research papers and articles in various academic journals of repute, and is the Founder Editor of Indian Foreign Affairs Journal and South Asia Journal.



**Security:** The world is currently facing major security issues and South Asia is not insulated from these issues. In many ways, these concerns are coming to the forefront in the form of ethnic, sectarian, religious and ideological insurgencies in South Asia. The situation is further compounded by longstanding matters, such as Indo-Pakistan claims over Kashmir and Sino-India border disputes.

Thereby, this cluster studies and monitors the various dimensions of security, while also exploring areas of conflict resolution and peace building. It also pays attention to wider dimensions of global security, including challenges such as climate change, natural disasters and pandemics.



1

**Professor  
Robin Jeffrey**

*Visiting Research Professor*

3

**Professor Riaz Ul Hassan**

*Visiting Research Professor*

5

**Ambassador See Chak Mun**

*Adjunct Senior Fellow*

2

**Dr Amitendu Palit**

*Head (Partnerships & Programmes); and  
Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

4

**Mr Shahid Javed Burki**

*Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

6

**Professor S D Muni**

*Visiting Research Professor*

**Not in picture :**

**Dr S Narayan**

*Head (Research); and Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

**Professor C Raja Mohan**

*Visiting Research Professor*

**Professor John Harriss**

*Visiting Research Professor*

**Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury**

*Senior Research Fellow*

**Dr Razeen Sally**

*Visiting Associate Professor*

**RESEARCH  
TEAM 1**



1

**Dr Md Mizanur Rahman**  
*Research Fellow*

2

**Dr Ronojoy Sen**  
*Visiting Research Fellow*

3

**Dr Shanthie Mariet  
D'Souza**  
*Research Fellow*

4

**Dr Nalin Mehta**  
*Visiting Senior Research Fellow*

5

**Mr Didier Chaudet**  
*Research Fellow*

6

**Dr Sinderpal Singh**  
*Research Fellow*

# RESEARCH TEAM 2

**Not in picture :**  
**Dr Rajshree Jetly**  
*Research Fellow*



1

**Mr Laldinkima Sailo**  
Research Associate

3

**Ms Pratima Singh**  
Research Associate

5

**Ms Mamta Sachan Kumar**  
Research Associate

2

**Ms Gloria Spittel**  
Research Associate

4

**Ms Hema Kiruppalini**  
Research Associate

6

**Mr Ishraq Ahmed**  
Research Associate

**Not in picture :**  
Ms Anusha Thallam  
Research Associate  
Mr Rodney Sebastian  
Research Associate

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# YEAR IN REVIEW 2011/2012

## CRISES GALORE AND A DOSE OF CONFIDENCE

### Afghanistan

#### Increase in Insurgent Violence

In 2011, insurgency-related violence peaked, the worst since the removal of Taliban from power in 2001. The plan for transition (Inteqal), i.e., transfer of authority to Afghans from the United States-led dispensation, met with several challenges in the form of increased insurgent attacks on NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) units, riots after American military personnel burned copies of the Holy Quran (20 February 2012) and the killing of 17 Afghan civilians by an American sergeant in Kandahar (March 2012). Taliban carried out attacks on high profile targets like the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul (June 2011), British Council (August 2011) and the American embassy (September 2011). In addition, Taliban launched a campaign of targeted killings in 2011 such as those of Ahmed Wali Karzai, half brother of President Hamid Karzai and presidential aide Jan Mohammed Khan and Ghulam Haider Hamidi, creating a power vacuum in South Afghanistan. The killing of High Peace Council chief Burhanuddin Rabbani in September 2011, by a Taliban 'peace emissary', symbolised a major setback for the peace process.

#### United States in Afghanistan

In 2011, the United States security forces launched a successful attack from Afghanistan to kill Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden at Abbottabad in neighbouring Pakistan. The US continued with its efforts to revive peace talks involving high-level Taliban leaders. A political office was opened in Qatar in January 2012 and moves were made to release imprisoned Taliban commanders from the Guantanamo Bay detention centre, the failure of which prompted Taliban to suspend the peace talks in March 2012.

#### Afghanistan's International Outreach

India and Afghanistan signed the Agreement of Strategic Partnership (ASP) on 4 October 2011, signalling intentions of long term friendship and cooperation. The second Bonn conference on 'Afghanistan and the International Community: From Transition to the Transformation Decade', held in December 2011, set an extended period of international assistance: 2014-24. The Istanbul Conference in November 2011 provided a new agenda for regional cooperation, by placing Afghanistan at its centre and engaging the 'Heart of Asia' countries for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

### Bangladesh

It was a mixed year for Bangladesh. It posted a growth of 6.3-6.5 per cent, and was well on the way to achieving UN Millennium Development Goals in the social sector by 2015. Garment exports earned USD 18 billion (next only to China). Remittances from Bangladeshi workers overseas reached USD 12 billion. Foreign exchange reserves were satisfactory, at USD 11 billion. But infrastructure remained weak, and labour unrest continued to threaten the important garment industry. Politically, the government faced several challenges, compounded by its inability to arrive at an understanding with the opposition on the method of elections due in 2014, the previously existing caretaker system for the electoral period having been scrapped by the present rulers. Relations between the two major political parties, the ruling Awami League and the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, continue to be confrontational, with the hope of any understanding seeming well beyond the rim of the saucer.

#### Foreign Relations

A climax of good relations with neighbouring India was anticipated on the eve of September 2011 visit to Bangladesh by India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But the refusal by Mamata Bannerjee, Chief Minister of the Indian state of West Bengal, to allow the signing of an accord on the division of Teesta River waters queered the pitch. Also problematic was the opposition by the Assam government in India to the proposals for mutual exchange of enclaves. Nevertheless, Bangladesh continued to lend strong support to anti-terror measures, something heartening to India, and bilateral relations remained on an even keel. The removal of Nobel Laureate Professor Mohammed Yunus (highly popular in the West for his microcredit programmes) from the helm of Bangladesh's flagship Grameen Bank raised concerns for Bangladesh-US bilateral relations.

## Bhutan

### Local Elections

The most important development in Bhutan during the year under review was the successful holding of elections to dzongkhag, gewog and thromde – the district, sub-district and lower administrative and judicial units. Elections to these local bodies, initially scheduled to take place soon after the parliamentary polls in March 2008, were postponed a number of times and finally held between January and June 2011. Results were announced in August 2011. During the first round of these elections, voter turnout was 56 per cent but this petered to 27 per cent in the second round. This underlines voter apathy and a weak base of public consciousness and awareness about the nascent democracy that replaced absolute monarchy. The holding of these elections and their outcome will strengthen the position of present Prime Minister Jigmi Yoeser Thinley and his party Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (Bhutan Peace and Prosperity Party). In the context of Bhutan, no less important was the marriage of King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck with a commoner and his childhood friend Jetsun Pema in October 2011.

### Economy and International Relations

Bhutan is the second-richest South Asian country (in terms of per capita income) after Maldives. Bhutan notched up around eight per cent growth in the year under review, up from the previous year's 5.7 per cent. This was mainly due to sustained investments and activity in the hydro-power sector, estimated to be growing at the rate of 20-25 per cent. The high growth was fuelled by the industry and services sectors while there was sluggish growth in the agricultural sector.

Bhutan maintained cordial relations with the wider international community. Thimphu's traditional relations with India will be reinforced by the continuing growth of Bhutan's hydro-power sector. Bhutan has also advanced in its engagement with China which is keen to establish diplomatic relations with Bhutan before disputed border issues can be formally and finally settled. As a result of Prime Minister Thinley's diplomatic efforts, Bhutan's international image and prestige were strengthened when the United Nations adopted in 2011 a resolution on 'Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development'. Bhutan nationally emphasises 'Gross National Happiness' (GHP) rather than 'Gross National Product' (GNP).

## India

### New Government for India's Largest State

The general election in Uttar Pradesh (UP), held in seven phases in February and March 2012, resulted in the overthrow of the increasingly controversial government led by Mayawati (a Dalit) and in the triumph of the Samajwadi Party, led by veteran politician Mulayam Singh Yadav. Mulayam put his son Akhilesh forward as party leader and Chief Minister. Apart from much local significance, the election was notable for the failure of Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi – touted as India's future prime-minister-in-the-making – to get the better of other parties.

### Anna Hazare: The Anti-Corruption Sizzle and Fizzle

Social activist Anna Hazare's 13-day fasting campaign in New Delhi in August 2011 for a strong anti-corruption authority in India, known as the Lokpal, hit the international headlines. A popular hate-corruption movement appeared to take off in the wake of several scams in high places in recent times. However, once Hazare called off his fast after being given assurances by Parliament that a strong Lokpal would be instituted, the new wave lost much of its momentum. A two-day fast in Mumbai by him in December 2011, even as Parliament was debating the Lokpal Bill, did not come close to attracting the same magnitude of support seen earlier in that year. In the first few months of 2012, the Lokpal was yet to see the light of day.

### Telecom Operators Fret while Users Frolic

In February 2012, the Supreme Court, India's highest judicial body, ruled that 122 corporate licences for second-generation (2G) telephone services – including short messaging service, music and video – be cancelled. The Indian government would now have to allocate the valuable Radio Frequency again by a fair and transparent mechanism. The original allocation was deemed (by many observers) to have been farcical, involving quickly changed dates for documents and deposits and bargain-basement prices for the lucky and well-connected companies. A Raja, Communications Minister responsible for the revoked allocation, was still in jail when the court delivered its verdict. (He was later released on bail in May, after 15 months in prison). The big-business interests involved in Indian telecommunications number more than a dozen and most expressed apprehension at a new bidding process and claimed that uncertainty would retard investment necessary to expand 3G and 4G services. Meanwhile, India's mobile-phone subscribers officially passed the 900 million mark.

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### 'Maoist' Movement

The Prime Minister of India referred to the virulently violent Maoist or Naxalite movement for social justice as 'the greatest threat to our national security'. Sporadic conflict resulted in hundreds of deaths in central and eastern India in the 21st century. The conflict exposed some aspects of India's skewed development. Commerce and industry spread to India's remote resource-rich areas and collided with tribal inhabitants long ignored by the state. In the process, these Scheduled Tribes did not, however, get integrated into mainstream India in economic and social terms. In the circumstances, the Maoists exploited India's political system by operating across states and forcing upon them formidable security challenges of inter-provincial coordination.

### Foreign Affairs

A notable development in New Delhi's neighbourhood diplomacy was the agreement on establishing a new 'Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs'. Signed on 17 January 2012, the accord was designed to enhance the comfort level between these two Asian mega-states as they continued to address their border dispute through talks between their respective Special Representatives. On a parallel track, India and Japan issued a fresh 'Vision' statement on 28 December 2011 for the 'enhancement' of their 'Strategic and Global Partnership'. Pakistan's announcement of intention to move towards normalising trade relations with India was noteworthy as also Australia's decision to sell uranium for India's civil nuclear purposes. Overall, New Delhi's ties with the United States and other major powers remained generally robust during the year in review.

## Maldives

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### President Resigns

The most important development in Maldives during the year under review was the resignation of the first democratically elected President, Mohammad Nasheed, on 6 February 2012. He handed over power to Vice President Mohammad Waheed Hassan. This was the culmination of an almost-year-long conflict between Nasheed's government and the opposition driven by the previously-ousted President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, and his party. A tipping point was reached when a powerful section of the Maldives security forces turned against Nasheed who later asserted that that the denouement was in fact a coup where he was forced to hand over power at the point of gun.

### Street Protests amid Changes in Economic Policy

The conflict between Nasheed's government and the opposition was triggered by his moves to change the levers of economic and political power, where the allies and appointees of the bygone regime of Gayoom still held significant stakes. Nasheed had gradually started acting against the Gayoom stakeholders in Maldives judiciary, bureaucracy and the most lucrative sector of the country's economy, tourism. Protests against these economic and political/bureaucratic changes started in April-May 2011 and lasted until Nasheed's resignation. During the financial year 2011-2012, Maldives maintained an impressive growth rate of 7.4 per cent and remained the richest country in South Asia. More than a quarter of Maldivian national prosperity comes from the tourism sector.

### SAARC Summit

Maldives hosted the 17th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Male, when Nasheed was at the helm. Maldives' initiatives for environmental reforms received appreciation and support from the international community including the Asian Development Bank. With the change in regime in Maldives, analysts expect a bit of cooler relations with India and the West and warmer ties with China, Sri Lanka and the Islamic world.

## Nepal

### Government and Constitutional Woes

Nepal's political evolution, since the election of a Constituent Assembly in 2008, has been marred by frequent changes in government and by a lack of consensus among major political parties on critical issues of peace process and constitution-writing. The government headed by Jhal Nath Khanal of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) resigned on 14 August 2011. The United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) forged an alliance with the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF) to replace this government and the Vice President of the UCPN-M, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, was sworn in as the new Prime Minister on 29 August 2011. This aroused unprecedented hopes in the country regarding the resolution of pending contentious issues. Considerable progress was made in regard to the scripting of a constitution. But the form of government and the question of federalism, i.e. restructuring of the Provincial States in 'New Nepal', proved difficult. A State Restructuring Commission was set up in November 2011, headed by the Chairman of UCPN-M, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, but, as of March-end 2012, there were no hopes of a constitution being promulgated.

### The Fate of Maoist Cadres

The new government succeeded in forging a seven-point understanding among the major political parties on resolving the question of Maoist armed cadres and agreed that, of about 19,000 of such cadres, 6,500 would be integrated in the army and the rest would either seek voluntary retirement through cash compensation or accept a rehabilitation package. However, when it came to ascertaining the wishes of the cadres, only 3,129 opted for integration in the army, 7,286 for voluntary retirement and almost none (only six) for rehabilitation. Their weapons were surrendered to the Nepal Army. The process of integration, which started in July 2011, ran into technical difficulties related to the age and educational qualifications of the cadres. However, the resolution of the issue of armed cadres marked major progress in Nepal's peace process.

## Pakistan

This was a particularly troubled period for Pakistan. The killing of Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad in Pakistan by the United States in a lightning military operation, which shook the Pakistani state to its core, brought relations between the two countries to their lowest ebb ever. Islamabad reacted by blocking the use of Pakistani territory for transport of supplies to the American and NATO troops in neighbouring Afghanistan. Washington responded by holding back promised funds for the cash-strapped government in Islamabad. This further exacerbated the faltering situation in Pakistan, South Asia's poorest-performing economy with a GDP growth rate projected at 3-3.5 per cent in 2012.

### Termination of the IMF Programme

In this deteriorating situation, Islamabad decided to walk out of the International Monetary Fund's programme, negotiated in November 2008, under which over USD 11 billion of capital was to flow into Pakistan. Islamabad's decision was taken to pre-empt any punitive move by the IMF which was unhappy that the Pakistani government had not taken steps considered necessary to raise more domestic resources. By 2012, the tax-to-GDP ratio fell below 10 per cent, one of the lowest in the world.

### Rise of Imran Khan

As the ruling coalition in Islamabad, led by the Pakistan People's Party, approached the end of its five-year term, Imran Khan, a cricket legend who won the World Cup for Pakistan in 1992, launched a brisk political campaign to gain public support. Popular disaffection with the established parties and a series of successful public meetings seemed to give him a previously elusive political start.

### Improving Relations with India

A series of meetings involving several senior leaders and officials from Pakistan and India brought about a palpable improvement in relations between the two contesting neighbours. Possible, as a result, is a significant increase in bilateral trade which had declined to a fraction of what it was between the populations on both sides before Partition and independence in 1947.

## Sri Lanka

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### UN Panel of Experts Delivers Report

A new and contested political reality dawned in April 2011 when a key report was submitted by a panel which was appointed by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to advise him on matters of accountability in regard to the alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law during the final stages of the war between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The panel detected 'credible allegations' of war crimes and crimes against humanity on the part of both the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE. The report called for an independent international investigation into these alleged violations. But the Sri Lankan Government dismissed the report as a 'biased' and 'fundamentally flawed' document. The political opposition in Sri Lanka also denounced the report as 'interference'. Colombo eventually chose to go by the final report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC).

### Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission

This commission of inquiry was appointed by Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa in May 2010 to evaluate the facts and circumstances of the country's internal conflict from 2002 till the end of the war in May 2009. The commission's final report, submitted in November 2011, called for sweeping democratic reforms in general and specific initiatives such as language reform and the quick disposal of cases of those detained on suspicion of involvement with the LTTE. The report did not recommend an international probe but called for credible investigation into widespread accusations of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances while clearing Sri Lanka's military of deliberate attacks on civilians during the final phases of the conflict.

### Resolution against Sri Lanka at United Nations Human Rights Commission

A United States-sponsored resolution was adopted at the UNHRC session in March 2012. The broad-spectrum resolution went no farther than urging Sri Lanka to implement the LLRC recommendations. Diplomatically significant, though, was the fact that the resolution was passed, with 24 members voting in favour, 15 against, and eight abstaining. In a surprise move, India, which had supported Sri Lanka at previous hearings at the UNHRC, voted in favour of this resolution. This led to a heightening of traditional suspicions about India in some Sri Lankan quarters but there was no immediate backlash from Colombo or its friends at the UN. Since March 2012, Colombo too began to harp on a 'National Action Plan' that would apparently translate the LLRC recommendations into reality.

## AWARDS & ACCOLADES

### • Sat Pal Khattar Receives Padma Shri

ISAS Board Member, Mr Sat Pal Khattar, was honoured with the Indian Government's fourth highest civilian award, the Padma Shri Award, in 2011. He received the award from the President of the Republic of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil. Mr Khattar is the first Singaporean to be thus honoured by India.

### • Ambassador Gopinath Pillai Awarded Padma Shri

In January 2012, it was announced that ISAS Board Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, will be among the recipients of the Padma Shri Award, the fourth highest civilian award conferred by the Government of India, for the year 2012. Ambassador Pillai follows in the wake of ISAS Board Member, Mr Sat Pal Khattar, who received the Padma Shri Award, on 24 March 2011.

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# PLANS FOR FY 2012/2013

## Research Initiatives:

ISAS has formulated a research strategy for 2012/2013 and beyond to have a sharper focus in the following areas:

- **Economic, Political and Social Developments in India**

In the coming year, ISAS will focus on how India's growth is changing its socio-economic landscape and affecting rural-urban development. ISAS will also examine the long term effects of this phenomenon on South Asian business, politics and society. It will also study the impact of constitutional, electoral, legal and educational reforms on South Asia's internal politics and consequently, international investments into the country.

- **Domestic and Regional Issues in South Asia**

ISAS will conduct field trips to North East India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal, particularly to appraise integration prospects in the region. It will also examine socio-economic and political trends that will influence integration, and the extent to which economic interests will steer South Asian countries towards greater cooperation.

- **South Asian Relations with the US, East Asia and Southeast Asia**

ISAS will conduct high-level consultations to better understand the dynamics of South Asian bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations with global players, such as, the US, China and specific Southeast Asian countries. For instance, it will examine the South Asian perspective on the rise of China and its implications on the region.

- **South Asian Diaspora**

ISAS intends to develop Singapore as a hub for research on South Asian Diaspora networks. ISAS will also host the second edition of the South Asia Diaspora Convention (SADC) that it has successfully launched in 2011. ISAS seeks to proactively engage partners in North America, Australia, the Middle East and Europe for SADC 2013 by hosting meetings with key communities in these regions.

This is in line with its objectives to study the impact of South Asian developments and diaspora through a much larger lens, and will also support efforts for a Singapore leadership of the South Asian Diaspora community.

## Administrative Initiatives

ISAS has drawn up a series of measures to enhance its administrative functions and support its research activities.

- **Enhance Knowledge Networks**

The inaugural South Asia Diaspora Convention in 2011 enabled ISAS to initiate a knowledge network in North America, Australia, the Middle East and Europe. The South Asian Diaspora website, [www.southasiandiaspora.org](http://www.southasiandiaspora.org), will be developed into a virtual portal for better reach and connectivity among global South Asians.

- **Benchmarking and Research Governance**

ISAS will align itself with the NUS benchmarking and research governance initiative to develop an institutional peer-review programme. This will validate processes and benchmark the quality of ISAS output. We will invest in new technology to enhance productivity and accountability to meet the guidelines of international standards of research governance.

- **Social Media**

To further proliferate research outputs and create mindshare for ISAS, the Institute will harness new media, such as Youtube and Facebook platforms. ISAS will participate in open access initiatives to disseminate its content extensively.

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