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Top: Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, (left) with India's Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, in Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) on 12 November 2014, on the occasion of East Asia Summit and the ASEAN-India Summit.

Photo: Courtesy High Commission of India in Singapore.

Bottom: Singapore's Emeritus Senior Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, (second from left) with India's High Commissioner to Singapore, Ms Vijay Thakur Singh; ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, (first from right) and former Director of ISAS, Professor Tan Tai Yong, (first from left) at the launch of ISAS publication, *Singapore and India: Towards A Shared Future*, in Singapore on 18 June 2015.

Photo: By Special Arrangement.

From the DIRECTOR'S DESK



Strategically located at the heart of a cluster of high-powered think tanks in Heng Mui Keng Terrace at the edge of the NUS campus, the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) is an autonomous research institute, with a mandate to study contemporary South Asia from a global perspective. With its thirty-five researchers and administrators, the ISAS presents a unique combination of functions including research and analysis of social, political, diplomatic and economic trends in South Asia and their global implications, communication of policy analysis to a very large, world-wide body of decision- and opinion-makers and stakeholders, comparative studies and policy analysis, organisation of major events and training of the next generation of talented Singaporeans. The ISAS draws on considerable in-house expertise in the domains of trade and industry, foreign affairs, governance and civil society of South Asia with area specialisation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Maldives and well beyond the shores into the Bay of Bengal and parts of the Indian Ocean. For specific events, the ISAS draws on its global network, international organisations, universities and think tanks, based on partnership.

As ISAS sets its targets for the next ten years, we continue to build on the intellectual heritage of the first decade of its existence. We shall continue our commitment to the rigorous analysis

of public policy in contemporary South Asia and its connectivity to Singapore in terms of the knowledge flow and counter flow. We shall strengthen our engagement with our stakeholders in the ministries, the scholarly community of the NUS and beyond them, the peoples of Singapore and South Asia. The method of our work will comprise:

- The annual conference to showcase research relevant to South Asia, to the stakeholders and public of Singapore;
- The South Asian Diaspora Convention, which is a truly global event;
- Regular seminars held in our premises that will continue to act as a hub for exchange of knowledge, open to the public and feeding into our regular series of publications such as 'insights' and 'briefing papers', longer 'working papers', 'special reports' and scholarly monographs;
- Facilitation of strategic dialogues between Singapore and South Asian states;
- Participation in international conferences and collaborative research with the scholarly community of the NUS and beyond;
- International workshops, based on policy relevant issues of society, economy, state and foreign policy of South Asia, with international collaborations.

Along with our publications, the events we organise will enhance our brand recognition as an institute based on interdisciplinary and global synergy, networking within and beyond the NUS, distinctiveness of our academic agenda and the exceptional character of our institute as a 'knowledge hub' on South Asia, in fact, the only one of its kind in Southeast Asia.

Finally, while the entire gamut of South Asian life from the economy to politics, society, governance, and foreign policy to literature falls under the domain of our remit as a think tank, three key concepts – Democracy, Diplomacy and Development and their entanglement – provide a focus to our research and policy analysis. We believe that this focus will become an integral part of our brand recognition in the region as well as globally over the next decade. With its full access to the research community of the NUS, its world-wide reach and optimal location in Singapore, the ISAS can confidently move into the next decade in which our researchers will play a crucial role as interpreter, enhancer and intellectual partners in policy analysis and dissemination, focused on South Asian and comparative studies.

SUBRATA MITRA

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Anchoring India's 'ACT EAST' POLICY

SINDERPAL SINGH



Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, (left) in conversation with India's Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, on the occasion of the East Asia Summit in Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) in November 2014.

Mr Narendra Modi's current tenure as India's Prime Minister has received mixed reviews. At home, there has been a mixture of both praise and criticism for the Modi Government's economic and social policies. In foreign policy, however, he has garnered accolades from foreign policy analysts for his seemingly proactive outreach to various countries both regionally and beyond. High-profile visits to the United States, China, Japan, Australia and the United Arab Emirates are prominent examples of his 'shuttle diplomacy'.

An important aspect of Mr Modi's foreign policy approach has been to

rebrand India's 'Look East Policy' to India's 'Act East Policy'. The rebranding was an effort to signal this government's desire to better the previous government's efforts in building closer links with the countries in East Asia. East Asia, with the exception of Japan and China, has not featured much on Mr Modi's itinerary of early high-profile visits. At this writing, his impending trip to Singapore in November 2015 is going to be closely watched.

Given Singapore's status as one of India's closest partners in Southeast Asia, there are varied expectations from this visit. From his perspective, there will be three

main areas in which India's interests could be furthered from his visit to Singapore.

The first area will be diaspora engagement. In several of Mr Modi's overseas trips, large-scale events attended by segments of the Indian diaspora have become the norm. These events are aimed at reaching out to the diaspora in an attempt to foster a greater enthusiasm for his domestic economic plans. This enthusiasm for Mr Modi's economic plans, it is hoped, will lead to two possible outcomes. The first will be enticing the business community within the diaspora to invest in India. Convincing the Indian business diaspora that India under Mr Modi is a worthwhile investment destination will thus be a key plank of this visit. The second will be to foster stronger links between India and the Indian diaspora in Singapore. This involves building closer people-to-people links between India and Singapore, and the Indian diaspora has been identified as the logical starting point for such an enterprise.

The second area, and related to the first point, is the need to convince businesses, both large and small, to invest in India. Prime Minister Modi has gone to great lengths to depict his present tenure as one which is business-friendly – this will be an important



A panel discussion at the annual India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue, held in New Delhi in May 2015.

aspect of his interactions during his visit to Singapore. He will try to counter a seemingly widely-held perception that India, in comparison to China, is a difficult investment destination for foreign capital.

The third area is strengthening the strategic ties between India and Singapore. Singapore is one of India's leading partners in Southeast Asia; this fact has not been lost on the current Modi Government.

As part of Mr Modi's new 'Act East' policy, Singapore is expected to play a key role in facilitating India's willingness to play a more visible role in the East Asian region.

Joint military exercises between the two countries, especially in association with third countries, have grown steadily over the years; Mr Modi will be keen to convey India's desire and ability to develop these strategic ties even further. In addition, this visit will also allow India to reiterate its position on the necessity for freedom of navigation within the wider Indian Ocean Region and the need for states to come to a negotiated settlement where there are overlapping maritime claims.

Overall, Mr Modi's visit will help keep India visible and relevant within Singapore to a broad range of stakeholders, including the Indian

diaspora, the business community, and the political class as well as amongst Singapore's non-Indian population. As Singapore and India celebrate 50 years of bilateral diplomatic relations, Mr Modi will aim to strengthen this relationship even further with his inaugural official visit to Singapore.

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India's APEC AMBITION

AMITENDU PALIT

India's economic and strategic links with the Asia-Pacific region have expanded since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of progressive outward-orientation of the Indian economy. Several Asia-Pacific economies – notably China, the United States of America, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and Australia – are now among India's top trade-partners. Indian industries and consumers are also increasingly featuring in the global and regional value chains running through the region, both as suppliers and processors of raw materials and intermediates and also as markets for final demand. Trade and investment linkages are also deepening through India's various free trade agreements (FTAs) with the region, such as with Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The formalisation of the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) involving ASEAN and its FTA-partners – Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Japan and South Korea – would further integrate India with the region, as would its bilateral FTAs with Australia and Canada.

Asia-Pacific's strategic significance for India is reflected in its ambition to become a formal member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. India's major economic drivers, as evident in the Narendra Modi

Government's external engagement policy (e.g. access to energy resources, engaging the Indian diaspora, attracting investment and technical expertise for 'Make in India', and expanding the country's strategic influence in global and regional economic forums) justify India's eagerness for membership of APEC. India's bid appears to be enjoying significant support, following endorsement by some major APEC members (e.g. US, China, Russia, Japan, Australia).

The possibility of India becoming a member of APEC is intricately linked to its ability to become more close-knit with the economic architecture of the Asia-Pacific. Notwithstanding its increasing presence in regional production networks, India's hesitation to adopt more 'open' external-sector policies, particularly for imports, along with limited institutional capacities and lack of political will for implementing a strong outward-oriented trade policy, have constrained its pace of economic integration with the region. While domestic priorities influence India's hesitation, the manifestations of the latter in defensive postures in regional trade negotiations have dented India's image as a trade liberaliser.

India's success in obtaining APEC membership would be determined by its willingness and capacity to reorient its trade policy. With several APEC

members combining to form the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) – a mega-Regional Trade Arrangement envisaging deep and comprehensive trade liberalisation including convergence of domestic rules and standards that influence cross-border movements of goods, capital, knowledge, technology and people – trade governance in Asia-Pacific is poised to change dramatically. Over time, the TPP and RCEP can inch closer, and might even gel into the broader regional compact of the FTAAP (Free Trade Area for the Asia-Pacific). These far-reaching changes in the regional trade architecture create significant challenges for India's trade policy in the light of its aspirations for APEC membership.

Along with economic ties, India's strategic links with the Asia-Pacific region are also deepening and widening. Apart from being a 'strategic partner' of the ASEAN, India is a member of the East Asia Summit (EAS) that includes several APEC members. India's bilateral strategic engagement with key APEC members such as the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, China, Russia and South Korea has accelerated under the Modi Government. Replacing the earlier 'Look East Policy' by the new 'Act East' policy indicates India's plans to engage the Asia-Pacific more vigorously. Given such activism on the part of India, its entry into APEC would also depend on the implications for the regional strategic



Photo: By Special Arrangement

India's Finance Minister, Mr Arun Jaitley, with Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large and Co-Chair of India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue, Professor Tommy Koh, (fourth from right); Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large and ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, (third from right); and Dean and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore, Professor Kishore Mahbubani, (first from left), on the occasion of the India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue held in New Delhi in May 2015.

architecture and the complex strategic dynamics between the countries of the region, as perceived by APEC members.

An International Workshop on 'India's Integration with Asia-Pacific: Economic and Strategic Aspects', being organised by ISAS in Singapore on 14 and 15 January 2016, will study the economic and strategic aspects of India's integration with the Asia-Pacific in the larger context of its bid for membership of the APEC. The specific areas of focus will include:

- Analysis of India's trade with major APEC members and presence in regional value chains;
- Shifting postures and priorities in the ongoing regional trade negotiations, particularly the RCEP;
- Policy challenges from new regional trade architectures like the TPP;

- Geo-political drivers likely to influence the pace and degree of economic integration with the Asia-Pacific.

Academic perspectives gathered on the above issues from the workshop are expected to provide insights on the following questions of fundamental importance to India's greater integration with the region and possible membership of APEC:

1. Can India's trade policies, domestic regulations, and institutions, facilitate deeper integration with the Asia-Pacific and respond effectively to the challenges of the evolving regional economic architecture?
2. How would India's greater economic integration with the region influence the strategic dynamics of the Asia-Pacific?

ISAS plans to bring together scholars and experts from India and various APEC member countries for presenting papers on these issues at this international workshop. The core objective in this regard is to gather insights on the various economic and strategic issues mentioned above, from the perspectives of India, as well as those of APEC member countries. The presented papers will be utilised variously, including possible use as ISAS Insights/ Working papers, articles in specific journals, or chapters of an edited book.

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Quest For NEO-ALIGNMENT

P S SURYANARAYANA



India's Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, (left) with Chinese Premier, Mr Li Keqiang, at Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) when they met on the margins of the East Asia Summit on 13 November 2014.

The author of Independent India's 'Look East' Policy is often identified as Mr P V Narasimha Rao who served as Prime Minister from 1991 to 1996. With the relevant basic principles having been enunciated by him during his Singapore Lecture in 1994, when Singapore's founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew presided over the event, New Delhi's 'Look East' Policy is generally seen in terms of India's interactions with just Southeast Asia.

However, Mr Rao had a wider canvas indeed in his focus that included China, Japan and South Korea. Nonetheless, Singapore can indeed be an anchor for India's latest 'Act East' Policy, too, as

propounded by India's present Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi. At the same time, Mr Modi has recognised China as the niche-factor in pursuing his 'Act East' Policy – an update of the 'Look East' Policy. Unsurprisingly, he also seeks synergies with a China-wary Japan and an economic powerhouse like South Korea.

Given Mr Rao's enduring status as an unsung-'hero' among the Indian leaders of yesteryear, more so within India itself, some trace the roots of New Delhi's 'Look East' and 'Act East' Policies to the country's first Prime Minister, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru, who did interact with East Asia. Others trace the roots

all the way back to India's ancient and mediaeval empires with maritime interests in the East – the Andhra Satavahana dynasty, the Pallavas and the Chola dynasty, among others, in a chronological order.

The broad reality, though, is that Mr Rao attempted a leap of faith into the outer space of Independent India's regional diplomacy in the 1990s. Until then, with Pakistan being viewed by the Indian authorities as a bee in their bonnet, New Delhi's regional diplomacy was largely skewed towards the country's near- and distant-western flanks.

It is still relevant that Pakistan continues to be India's primary (if not the premier) diplomatic challenge. This aspect is, in a number of ways, directly linked to China's "all-weather partnership" (recently updated from "friendship") with the India-'fixated' Pakistan.

In the emerging Sino-Pakistani milieu, defined by the military-strategic connotations of the fledgling China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, Mr Modi is sharpening his 'Act East' Policy towards Beijing. In a form of neo-alignment (not to be confused as an alliance), he is already trying to engineer India's strategic tilt towards the United States. The context is that the dominant US is viewed by China as its competitor to be contested into the unforeseeable future.

Mr Modi's effort in this regard is evident from the new plans he has crafted with the help of US President Barack Obama. The two have agreed upon a qualitative upgrading of the US-India defence ties. New Delhi is expected to be the beneficiary of American military knowhow; Washington is looking to see India as a potential 'friend in need' with reference to the chequered US-China ties. Now, the US and India have not publicly agreed upon joint, or even coordinated, naval patrols in the South China Sea, which Beijing is possessive about. Yet, China sees the relevant Obama-Modi Strategic Vision Statement as an accord which, while not ruling out such patrolling, might even be a smokescreen for US efforts to empower India as a 'net-security provider' in the 'Indo-Pacific' region. This is a matter of some concern to China, certainly.

Mr Modi, for his part, is seeking to avoid placing all of India's (proverbial) eggs in a single (American) basket. As part of his evident neo-alignment policy (different from diplomacy of alliances), he is inviting China to develop an economic stake in India. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, both of whom have individually held a plurality of conversations with Mr Modi, are no less keen to advance China's economic interests by investing in India in sizable proportions.

There is more to China as a niche-factor in Mr Modi's 'Act East' Policy than meets the eye. It is true that New Delhi's first major breakthrough towards rapprochement with Beijing was achieved in 1988 during the talks that India's then Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, had with China's then Paramount Leader, Mr Deng Xiaoping. In a dramatic follow-up in 1993, Mr



Panellists at an ISAS Symposium on "Modi's Visit to China", held in Singapore on 11 June 2015: (from left) Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, ISAS Principal Research Fellow and former Foreign Advisor (Foreign Minister) of Bangladesh; Mr P S Suryanarayana, Editor (Current Affairs) at ISAS, and author of this article; Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy) at ISAS, and author of the article on "India's APEC Ambition"; and Dr Sinderpal Singh, Senior Research Fellow and Research Co-lead (Security and International Relations) at ISAS, and author of the article on "Anchoring India's 'Act East' Policy".

Rao and China's then President and Chairman of China's Central Military Commission, Mr Jiang Zemin, signed the first-ever military-related confidence-building agreement (CBA) for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the disputed Sino-Indian border.

At this writing, the unsettled dispute is being 'managed' amid frequent non-lethal episodes of military stand-off between the two sides along the unclear Line of Actual Control at the frosty Himalayan heights. Such 'management' has been made possible by the crafting of a series of CBAs, the latest being the Sino-Indian Border Defence Cooperation Agreement of 2013.

Unsurprisingly in these circumstances, New Delhi is exploring with Beijing a connectivity project in the name and style of Bangladesh-China-India-

Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. As a contra-reality, the route-map of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor poses a strong challenge to India: in a related move, Mr Xi has now virtually annulled the "temporary" nature of the 1963 Sino-Pakistani boundary agreement that covers a slice of India's territory. The fact is that Beijing and New Delhi do not have the kind of strategic convergence that could have helped craft a CPEC-Plus connectivity project covering India besides China and Pakistan – a western version of the BCIM in the East.

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The NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE

RAJEEV RANJAN CHATURVEDY

The primacy of South Asian neighbourhood is evident in India's recent foreign policy initiatives. The current Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has transformed the atmospherics by enabling political-level discourse between India and its South Asian neighbours. Mr Modi's foreign policy framework seems geared towards cultivating positivity and hope in India's relations with its neighbours. Indeed, India can become a credible power on the global stage only after attaining enduring primacy in its own neighbourhood. The Modi Government desires a peaceful and stable environment for India's development.

What are the salient features of India's policy towards its neighbours under the current government? The first feature is to build political connectivity through dialogue and engagement. Mr Modi has shown zeal and vigour in engaging neighbours at the highest political level. In the previous government, the then Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, was unable to put forward an overarching political framework to engage India's South Asian neighbours. Self-doubt, fears about losing 'strategic autonomy', and domestic political concerns significantly limited New

Delhi's capacity to transform its relations with its South Asian neighbours then. In contrast, Mr Modi understands that political rapport is as important as economic initiatives. He is making conscious efforts to maintain personal contacts with the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The second important feature is to follow through on announcements and tracking progress. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Government of Atal Behari Vajpayee is remembered for its noteworthy achievements in the past (including India's nuclear tests). Certainly, mutual partnership with the South Asian neighbours could herald a new level of positivity and more importantly, soften the mistrust. Should such policies prove successful, cooperation on more divisive and sensitive issues such as terrorism, separatism, insurgency, religious fundamentalism, and ethnic strife, could be attempted with greater chances of success.

The third important feature is India's renewed emphasis on seamless connectivity – economic, physical and digital. Mr Modi's emphasis is on five Ts – trade, tourism, talent, technology and tradition. The idea is to build

and strengthen a peaceful, stable, democratic and economically interlinked neighbourhood. Mr Modi's intent is noticeable in India's efforts which resulted in an agreement on electricity-sharing among SAARC countries through a common grid. Further, India has focussed on strengthening infrastructure connectivity, and creating a business-friendly environment in India by easing restrictions and reducing non-tariff barriers.

Articulating the idea of trans-Himalayan regionalism during his visit to Bhutan and Nepal, Mr Modi had emphasised that the sub-region holds the key to Asian cultural, environmental, political and regional security. Nonetheless, the challenge for Indian diplomacy lies in convincing its neighbours that India is an opportunity, not a threat. Far from being overwhelmed by India, they can gain access to its vast market.

The fourth important feature is active collaboration and partnership with extra-regional/major powers on issues of mutual interests. Issues of mutual interests include, but are not limited to, information sharing, technological cooperation and cooperation between law-enforcement agencies to counter transnational threats such as terrorism,

narcotics, trafficking, financial and economic fraud, cybercrime.

The fifth important feature is the greater attention to India's leadership role in the region. India considers South Asia as its sphere of influence. Concerned with the increasing Chinese influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, the Modi Government's emphasis is to regain India's supremacy in the region. On the one hand, India is extending various kinds of assistance and is scaling up efforts to deepen partnership with neighbouring countries. On the other hand, Mr Modi is also trying to connect with the people through social media; digital diplomacy has become an impressive tool in his foreign policy kit.

Finally, the sixth important feature of Mr Modi's neighbourhood policy is an argument of power – both hard- and soft-power.

While Mr Modi's priority is constructive engagement with neighbours, he has also sent a strong message to India's neighbours that, if and when required, India can be uncompromisingly tough. At least, this was crystal-clear in the case of Pakistan, when India called off the National Security Advisors-level talks and the Foreign Secretary-level talks, in protest against Pakistan's continued engagement with the Kashmir Hurriyat leaders, despite India's warning of negative consequences of such actions. Nonetheless, it would be challenging for the Modi Government to constructively engage Pakistan.

A strategy for each neighbouring country (and sometimes crosscutting

ones for several neighbours) may require better coordination among the various units of government in Delhi than has been the case to-date. Also, a greater mutual engagement between the foreign and security ministries in India could yield significant dividends.

Undoubtedly, India needs to devote more diplomatic and political energy towards tending its relationships with immediate neighbours. The Indian economy is growing faster than the other South Asian countries, and, given the disparity between the sizes of these economies, India will continue to outpace the others in the years to come. It remains to be seen how the Modi Government addresses some of the key structural bottlenecks

constraining India's foreign policy. India's engagement with its South Asian neighbours is full of challenges. As this is written, be it handling ties with Pakistan or the unfolding political situation in Nepal, the Modi Government has an uphill task in the neighbourhood.

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An ISAS Seminar on "Maritime Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific", held in Singapore on 28 September 2015: Panellists and participants (from left) Vice Admiral (Retd.) Anup Singh of the Indian Navy; Dr Sinderpal Singh, Senior Research Fellow and Research Co-lead (Security and International Relations) at ISAS; Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra, ISAS Director; Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy) at ISAS; Mr Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedy, Research Associate at ISAS, and author of the accompanying article; and Dr Dipinder Singh Randhawa, Senior Research Fellow at ISAS.

Global Change, SOUTH ASIAN CHOICES

SHAHID JAVED BURKI

The global order is being transformed faster than the world's institutional capacity to absorb the changes. The most troubling manifestation of the on-going changes is the movement into Europe of hundreds of thousands of people from the Middle East torn by a series of horrible wars. The initial reaction on the part of some of the European countries was to confine the incoming refugees in under-provisioned make-shift camps. Ultimately Germany and Austria, reminded no doubt of their own histories, spread the welcoming mat and allowed tens of thousands of people to cross their borders. The influx of the refugees will change the demographic profile of Europe.

Demography is at the heart of many other global changes. Russia has had a declining population ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is the result of the economic uncertainty created by the fall of the old regime and its succession by a group of leaders who have, by the adoption of a revanchist approach, invited the wrath of the Western world. By attempting and partially succeeding in pushing its borders beyond the accepted boundaries of the state, Moscow has

defied an established principle of international law: state-borders must not be changed by the use of force. The West's response of imposing economic and financial sanctions has inflicted a heavy cost on the Russian economy. Russia is another place where various forces, interacting with one another, are producing changes that are not good for global good.

In addition to demography, the content and direction of international trade is also a contributor to the on-going global changes. Twenty years ago the World Trade Organization was ushered on to the global stage in the expectation that a global trading order will be put in place. That hope has not been realised largely because the developed world has not been prepared to accommodate the demands of the developing world to become equal participants in the global trade order. The Doha Round of Trade Negotiations was launched in 2001 with the promise of turning it into a global "development round". However, led by the United States the developed world was more interested in designing a new trade order that would protect the interests of its corporations. The pharmaceutical

industry, for instance, did not want to have its large profits eroded by the manufacture of generic forms of drugs. For, instance the cost of producing some of these in factories in India was a small fraction of the price charged by the Western companies. When 14 years of negotiations did not produce an agreement, the United States decided to go on its own. It commenced work on two sets of regional agreements, one for the countries on the Pacific Rim, the other with the European Union. These arrangements were meant to serve two objectives: international trade was to be governed by the rules of trade that appealed to the United States. The aim was to have them become the norm. The other aim was to isolate and exclude China from these deals.

Europe is not the only area in turmoil. There are four civil wars in progress in the Middle East region, pitting the Sunnis against the Shiites and the authoritarian rulers against the aroused middle classes. Added to these will be the likely emergence of Iran as a major economic and military power in the region. Would the lifting of the Western sanctions on Iran add another source of conflict to the troubled area, or would



Photo: By Special Arrangement

'Pakistan Summit' in Australia in July 2015: With former Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Bob Hawke (third from left, in the foreground) are (from left) ISAS Director, Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra; Visiting Research Professor at ISAS, Professor Riaz Hassan; ISAS Principal Research Fellow and former Foreign Advisor (Foreign Minister) of Bangladesh, Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury; Visiting Senior Research Fellow at ISAS and author of this article, Mr Shahid Javed Burki, during an interlude at the Summit.

it help bring the rising Sunni extremism under control? Will the re-entry of Iran on the global economic and political scene help control the rise of Sunni extremism or further exacerbate it? These are difficult questions.

Perhaps nothing will change the already-frayed global order more than the growing rivalry between the United States and China. By one count, China has already become the world's largest economy. Using the purchasing power parity as the measure, the International Monetary Fund has determined that China overtook the United States sometime during the second quarter of 2014. Even with a significant slow-down in the rate of Chinese growth, the gap in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between it and the United States will continue to widen. An increasingly confident China has begun to assert itself on the global stage. It has been

investing heavily in its military, and has made it clear that it does not want distant powers to get involved in the areas it considers to be within its sphere of influence. At the same time, Washington, with its "pivot to Asia" policy, has reaffirmed its intention not to leave the western part of the Pacific Ocean in the hands of the Chinese. These different policy stances could become the basis of conflict – cold or even hot.

How should South Asia react to these changes occurring all around it? Should the countries of the region react by making individual public-policy choices? Or, conversely, should they work together and adopt an approach to jointly deal with the massive global changes? The arithmetic of individual country-responses will add up to something less than the total of a well-considered regional response. Left

to their own devices, the South Asian nations are likely to align themselves in different ways with the new global rivals, the United States and China. Pakistan has already entered into partnership with Beijing in its "One Belt, One Road" project that will connect the western provinces and autonomous regions of China with West Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Bangladesh may also feel tempted to link with China and become a part of this complex of road-and-rail system. Using these as the arteries of international commerce, the Chinese will be able to bypass the Malacca Straits to bring in vital imports from the countries to its west.

India, on the other, seems inclined to align itself with the United States, Japan, and Australia in what appears to be the "contain China" policy. If this were to happen, it would be a fundamental departure from the nonaligned movement founded and patronised by Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister. Such a split-response from South Asia will result in the region becoming the stage on which a new "Cold War" may well be played.

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Celebratory Spirit, SHARED FUTURE

A distinctive commemorative book, titled *Singapore and India: Towards a Shared Future*, was launched in Singapore on 18 June 2015. Diplomats, academics, policy makers, civil servants and community leaders attended the launch of the book – an intellectual output of ISAS.

The celebratory spirit of the book, which highlights the milestones of the Singapore-India relationship over the past fifty years through anecdotes, insights, stories and pictures, set a joyous tone for the event.

Singapore's Emeritus Senior Minister and ISAS Patron, Mr Goh Chok Tong, was the Guest of Honour. The event was made all the more memorable because of his pivotal role in the Singapore-India story – Mr Goh has been widely acclaimed for sparking an "India Fever" in Singapore that began in the 1990s.

The book's official launch in Singapore had followed its initial launch in New Delhi during Singapore President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam's state visit to India in February 2015.

Singapore's former Ambassador to India, Ambassador See Chak Mun, led the research team that produced the book, in his significant role as Senior Research Fellow at ISAS.

Following are excerpts from the speech delivered by Ambassador See Chak Mun at the launch of the book in Singapore:

"I am happy to introduce the commemorative book on 'Singapore-India: Towards a Shared Future'. The idea came from [ISAS] Chairman Gopinath Pillai and [ISAS Director] Prof Tan Tai Yong who thought that it was timely to produce the book to commemorate the 10th anniversary of ISAS, and the 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore. In fact, the book has already been launched in New Delhi in February this year to coincide with the State visit of [Singapore's] President Dr Tony Tan.

First, I would like to thank the younger members of the Research Team who have worked very hard and managed to produce the volume within nine months. They are Miss Tan Li Jen, Mr Rahul Advani and Miss Rinisha Dutt. In this book, we traced the historical links between Singapore and India, the political and economic relations, the cultural linkages as well as new communities and connections. Getting the story and writing it out. The more difficult part was to locate and get the old photographs. But we managed to find some old and rare photographs which are now published for the first time.

Let me relate to you some interesting stories during our research. For example, not many of us are aware that some of the architectural landmarks of Singapore like the Istana, Fort Canning and the St Andrew's Cathedral, which was rebuilt in 1861, were constructed entirely by trained Indian convict labourers. Why Indian convict labour? The first batch of Indian convicts arrived from Madras in 1825. Under the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, the British were to hand over Bencoolen (then a penal colony) to the Dutch in exchange for Malacca. Indian convicts bound for Bencoolen were then sent to Singapore where they were quickly put to all manner of work. For example, in the late-1850s, Indian convicts were called upon to get rid of man-eating tigers, probably including the tiger which found itself in the old Raffles Hotel!

Indian convicts stayed in the jail they built, but they were allowed to work outside. By 1867, the Straits Settlements ceased to be penal colonies, when they were brought under the control of the British Colonial Office. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Indian migration to Singapore and Malaya picked up quickly in view of the growth of the Singapore port and commercial plantations in Malaya.

For a short time in 1943, during the Japanese occupation, Singapore



The launch of ISAS commemorative book, *Singapore and India: Towards a Shared Future*, in Singapore on 18 June 2015: Singapore's Emeritus Senior Minister and ISAS Patron, Mr Goh Chok Tong, (third from left) with India's High Commissioner to Singapore, Ms Vijay Thakur Singh, and (from left) Singapore's former High Commissioner to India, Ambassador See Chak Mun; former Director of ISAS, Professor Tan Tai Yong; ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai; and ISAS Director, Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra.

served as the seat of the Provisional Government of Free India under the leadership of the charismatic Subhas Chandra Bose, who had formed the Indian National Army (INA) in Singapore with the objective of liberating India from British colonial rule.

[India's leader, Jawaharlal] Nehru visited Singapore officially three times, in 1937, 1946, and 1950. I have to tell you an interesting episode. During his visit to Singapore in 1937, Nehru was addressing a rally at the Jalan Besar Stadium. Midway through his speech,

Nehru paused unexpectedly. He noticed that a pregnant lady was standing in the crowd listening to him. Nehru asked that the pregnant lady be given a seat. That lady happened to be Gopinath Pillai's mother. Our good friend Gopi had listened to Nehru when he was still [to be] born! Or so the story goes.

Our friend Ameerali Jumabhoy provided us with two very rare photographs. One showed [India's national poet] Rabindranath Tagore when he visited Singapore. The other photo showed Nehru posing with young Tan Kah Kee

and Lien Ying Chow. This was when Nehru visited Singapore in 1946, at the invitation of Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander of Southeast Asia. When Nehru visited Singapore in 1950, he went to a reception at the India House, which is now the site of the Indian High Commissioner's residence. ...

Not so well-known was that even before Singapore became an independent nation in 1965, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew went to see Nehru twice for help and support. The first was in April 1962,

when Mr Lee sought Nehru's support for the proposed merger with Malaya to form a greater Malaysian Federation together with the British Borneo Territories of Sabah and Sarawak. Nehru was supportive of the merger proposal. In fact, in July the same year, the Indian delegation to the United Nations successfully blocked a petition to the UN Special Committee on De-colonisation, which was submitted by a political group representing the Council of Joint Action of Singapore, which included members like David Marshall, against the referendum proposal. India together with Cambodia and Tunisia argued that since Singapore had a freely-elected government, its action was not under the review of the UN Special Committee.

Mr Lee saw Nehru again in February 1964, this time to ask Nehru to use his moral influence to persuade [Indonesia's] President Sukarno to drop his confrontation campaign against Malaysia. On the very day of Singapore's

separation from Malaysia on 9 August 1965, PM Lee wrote to Indian Prime Minister [Lal Bahadur] Shastri requesting him to send a military advisor to help build the Singapore Army. PM Shastri did not send a military advisor; but in May 1967, Indian External Affairs Minister Mr Chagla visited Singapore and made two offers. One was a 2-seater India-built aircraft for pilot-training. The second was an offer of 80 trained Ladakh cavalry horses like those used by the Indian Presidential Guards.

This offer of cavalry horses had an interesting background which was told to me by Mr Jumabhoy. Apparently, the idea had come from Dr Goh Keng Swee, who was very impressed by the cavalry horses at India's Republic Day parade; and he would like to do the same for the Singapore National Day parade. For those who could still recall, there were indeed horses during our 1st National Day parade, and the horses were borrowed from the Singapore Turf

Club. What happened that day was that the contingent which was marching immediately behind the horses was the People's Action Party (PAP) contingent, and they kept stepping on the horse droppings. That was the end of the cavalry horses story, even though the reason given was that Dr Goh, being a frugal man as he was, could not bear thinking about the costs of feeding the 80 cavalry horses just for the National Day parade!

Back to current times! Singapore looked towards India when [its] PM Narasimha Rao began to open up the Indian economy in the early-1990s. [Singapore's] PM Goh Chok Tong tried to start a 'mild Indian fever'. There were some successful projects like the International Information Technology Park at Bangalore (ITPB), but also some failed projects like SIA [Singapore Airlines] trying to start a domestic airline [in India] together with the Tata Group. One investor group that deserved a mention here was the Parameswara Holdings that was formed in May 1993. It was an investment arm of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) which was to spearhead the Singapore investment drive into India. The first chairman was M K Chanrai, who was succeeded by Mr S Dhanabalan. One of the success stories was the Gateway Distripark, headed by our friend Gopinath Pillai.

The influx of Indian professionals to Singapore began in the early-1990s when the Singapore Government began to recruit Indian talent. One survey indicated that there are now over 1,000 Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) graduates living in Singapore, making Singapore the largest single city [with



Singapore Symposium, organised by ISAS in Chennai (India) on 27 July 2015: Mr K Shanmugam, (right) Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law at that time, and India's former Foreign Secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, at an interactive session.

the] presence of IIM alumni outside India. Another survey showed that in Asia, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) commanded wealth amounting to US\$ 80 billion, out of which US\$20 billion was in Singapore.

The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was the brain-child of PM Goh, and it was established in July 2004. ISAS began to invite prominent Indian politicians and personalities to speak at its seminars. It was little known that Mr Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, was the first speaker ever to speak at an ISAS seminar!

In the cultural section, we were able to get some photos of Bollywood movie

actors and actresses who came to Singapore either for movie-shooting or participating at Indian Films Festivals. One photo showed the old Diamond Cinema Theatre which specialised in showing Tamil movies.

I would now like to stop here, partly because I have been given only 10 minutes to introduce the book, and partly because if I were to go on and tell you other interesting stories, you will not read the book! Before I stop, I would like to take this opportunity to convey on behalf of the research team and the ISAS management thanks to all those who have contributed to make the book a success, whether by sending in old and rare photos, write-ups or by helping to

distribute the book. The list is too long for me to mention this afternoon, for which I offer my apology. But it can be found in the Acknowledgement page of the Book itself."



Scanned image of a couple of pages of *Singapore and India: Towards a Shared Future*.

Status of MUSLIMS IN INDIA

RIAZ HASSAN

By 2050, in the span of three-and-half decades, the demography of world religions will change significantly. The proportions of the various religions in the world population will remain the same or decline, except for Islam. Because Muslims have the highest rate of fertility and the youngest average age, the Muslim population is expected to increase from 1.6 billion or 23% of the world population in 2010 to 2.76 billion or 30% in 2050. This will nearly equal Christians, the world's largest religious group in size until now. The number of Christians in the United States, Europe and Australia will decline significantly because of a significant increase in the number of 'unaffiliated' population. Several countries including Britain, France, the Netherlands and Australia will cease to be majority-Christian countries (Pew Research Centre 2015).

These changes will also have significant implications for relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims in South Asia as well as globally. They may accentuate the existing tensions and/or give rise to new challenges for promoting harmonious inter-religious group-relations. Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to deepen the understanding of the demographic changes and their plausible sociological consequences.

The shifts in the global demography of religions will have a consequential impact in South Asia. The Muslim populations of all South Asian countries will record varying but significant degrees of change. Afghanistan's and Nepal's Muslim populations will more than double. Bangladesh will register the lowest increase, at around 36 per cent. The number of Muslims in Pakistan and Sri Lanka will increase by 63 and 48 per cent respectively. The largest and most consequential change, however, will be in the largest country in South Asia, India. India's Hindu population will increase by 35 per cent to 1.38 billion in 2050 (2010 being the base year), but the Indian Muslims will grow by 76 per cent from 176 million to 310 million in the same period. This means that the largest increase in the population of Muslims of South Asia will occur in India.

Furthermore, India will acquire a new global status in terms of religious composition of its population. It will not only be the largest Hindu country but, with its population of 310 million Muslims, India will also have the largest Muslim population in the world. South Asia, thus, will be home to the largest Muslim population – the second largest (Pakistan and the fourth largest (Bangladesh)). While Hindus will remain the majority-group in India's population, at 77 per cent, the proportion of Muslims will increase from 14 per cent

in 2011 to 18 per cent of the population in 2050. This means that almost one out of every four Indians will be a Muslim. Indian Muslims live in all parts of the country but over half of them live in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal and Kashmir.

The population increase will pose developmental challenges related to the provision of public services and survival-goods for large segments of population in all South Asian countries. It will exacerbate problems of environmental degradation, public security and socio-religious conflicts and political representation. In India, however, it will present additional and more complex challenges for its democratic political system which is grounded in its secular Constitution that envisions justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all Indian citizens. This vision has been enshrined in the Fundamental Rights chapter of the Constitution, specifically in Articles 25 to 30 which grant equality of citizenship and all the rights and privileges it entails to all, minority- as well as majority-communities. It has been emphatically affirmed by the Supreme Court of India.

India's economic growth over the past four decades has delivered significant developmental dividends to its vast population. Between 1990 and 2011, India's economy grew at a compound



A session in progress during a workshop on "Diversity, Equality, Citizenship and Indian Muslims", organised in Singapore by ISAS and the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding (MnM), University of South Australia, on 18 and 19 September 2015.

rate of around 7 per cent per year, and the per capita income (in current dollars) has increased over four times from US\$ 860 to US\$ 3,620. Its development indices show significant improvements.

Ideally, the benefits of economic development should remove inter-group inequalities and ameliorate social obstacles in the country. However, while there have been general improvements in the living conditions in India, these benefits have not been evenly and equally distributed. The evidence shows that Indian Muslims have not been equal beneficiaries of India's economic growth. Hassan, Zoya and Hassan, Mushirul have, in 'Assessing UPA Government's

Response to Muslim Deprivation' (in Hassan, Z and Hassan M. eds. 2013. India: Social Development Report 2012: Minorities at the Margins, New Delhi: Oxford University Press) noted as follows: "Most Muslims are much worse off because they benefit from no affirmative action. Their status in contemporary India was not very different from that of the Dalits in the mid-twentieth century, which led to constitutionally mandated affirmative action in their favours. If we take 1947 as the base line, Muslims have suffered downward mobility. This is not a new assessment for those who have investigated the socio- economic status of Muslims in India. ... Muslims face economic deprivation, social exclusion

and political under-representation".

It was this realisation that led to the establishment of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee, popularly known as the Sachar Commission. It was constituted to investigate if Indian Muslims faced a greater level of relative deprivation in different spheres and what corrective steps could be taken to ameliorate this situation. (Sachar, Rajinder. 2010. 'Foreword' in Basant, R and Shariff, A. eds. 2010. Oxford Handbook of Muslims in India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.)

One of the biggest gains of the Sachar Commission in India was

its reconstruction of the Muslim community as 'developmental subjects' in the State rather than primarily as a religious community. The Sachar Commission Report issued in 2006 marked a decisive shift from the politics of identity to the politics of development, because it demonstrated that the problems of the Muslims necessitated going beyond identity politics and the customary allegiances to secularism and pluralism.

The Sachar Commission Report (Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India 2006) as well as the National Household Surveys data provide critical evidence of the relative Muslim deprivation in a number of key social, economic and spatial indicators.

An indicator of the relative exclusion of Muslims in India is that their share in the public sector employment is significantly lower than their proportion in the population. In 12 states – West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu – Muslims comprise 15.4 per cent of the population, but their share in state employment is only 6.3 per cent. Spatial factors also play an important role in exacerbating relative disadvantage by determining access to social and economic public goods such as schools, health facilities, quality of roads etc. An important finding of the Sachar Commission was that, in general, all poor households had poor access to public amenities. In particular, the Commission found that public amenities such as schools, transport, medical facilities, and roads were relatively less in village settlements with high Muslim concentration (Sachar Commission Report, Chapter 7).



Professor Riaz Hassan, Visiting Research Professor at ISAS and author of this article, at the workshop on "Diversity, Equality, Citizenship and Indian Muslims", organised in Singapore by ISAS and the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding (MnM), University of South Australia, on 18 and 19 September 2015.

These findings are further supported by the analysis of the Human Development Index (HDI) of all Indian districts in all states, which shows that the HDI among Muslims tends to be associated with their proportion in the population. The Muslim HDI decreases as their proportion in the district population increases. But this relationship does not hold in 21 districts in which the proportion of Muslim population is over 50 per cent. However, the general relationship between the

percentage of Muslim population and the overall well-being of the Muslim community is fairly universal. In all districts, Muslims consistently live with lower socioeconomic standards than other groups. Specifically, the HDI values for Muslims tend to be much worse than the HDI values for the Hindu General category (Upper Caste Hindus), better than the values for the Hindu Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, and worse than those for other minorities. When the overall well-being

increases, Muslims experience a smaller increase in their Human Development Index values as compared to all other groups, including the Hindu SCs/STs. Conversely, when the HDI declines, Muslims experience a larger decline in their well-being compared with any other group. (Hassan, R.; Balaev, M; and Shariff, A. 2015, 'Spatial Dimensions of Muslim Well-being in India: A Case Study of Indian Districts', A paper presented at the Workshop on "Diversity, Equality, Citizenship and Indian Muslims", Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, September 2015.)

The political fault-lines in South Asia are largely drawn by its diversity: religious, ethnic, linguistic. This is clearly displayed in its political maps. In one way or another, religion has played a defining role in the creation of its three largest countries: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The nationalist fervour is becoming a potent force in all South Asian countries.

Nationalism is primarily an intellectual project and is strongly influenced and shaped by education, urbanisation and rising economic aspirations. With all these factors gaining momentum, nationalist sentiments are gaining ascendancy in all countries. This will have a significant impact on the scope that exists for political movements to mobilise supporters for the nationalist causes, which may include a particular vision of the national polity, equality of citizenship, fairer and more equitable access to public services and survival-goods.

The demographic and religious changes will also exacerbate the problems of identity, security and equity in all South Asian countries in different ways.

In Pakistan, these may intensify the struggle over the country's identity as an Islamic State – making and reinforcing Islam as the marker of its national identity and ideology. This will heighten religious, sectarian and ethnic tensions and conflicts which may threaten its territorial integrity. Bangladesh may face heightened tensions between the secularists and Islamists – already evident from several brutal murders in recent years of secular bloggers, creating security problems that may have serious consequences for political stability and economic development.

But it is in India where the identity-security-and-equity continuum will raise serious issues in all three areas. Indian Muslims carry a double burden of being labelled as 'anti-nationalists' and being 'appeased' simultaneously. This burden applies only to Indian Muslims and not to other socio-religious communities. The evidence presented in this paper and, more broadly, in the Sachar Commission Report signifies that the so-called appeasement has not delivered Indian Muslims many benefits. Their conditions are only slightly better than those of the Hindu SCs/STs and worse than those of the Hindu OBCs. Their Muslim identity often leads to suspicion and discrimination in housing, employment and schooling. At the same time, a majority of their fellow non-Muslim citizens regard the socio-cultural characteristics of the Muslim community as the cause of its backwardness.

In brief, Indian Muslims experience relatively higher levels of development- and equity-deficits; the increase in their numbers may exacerbate their condition. If not suitably addressed, the relative deprivation of Indian Muslims – likely the largest Muslim population in any country in the world

by 2050 – will create a disjunction between the promise of equality of citizenship in India's secular democracy for all (including the minorities), and the existential reality, thus creating social and political conditions which may undermine India's political stability, and render the Indian Muslims a security threat. This may further accentuate their alienation and marginalisation. If such developments materialise, they will have cascading effects not only in South Asia but globally.

The Indian state and its political infrastructure have been relatively successful in countering challenges presented by the diversity of its population. India thus has the capacity and the ability to deal with these new challenges, given the necessary political and collective will.

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Clarity on Cleanliness, WISDOM ON WASTE

ROBIN JEFFREY

"Clean India" or "Swachh Bharat" has been a signature programme of India's national government since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches on Independence Day (15 August) and Mahatma Gandhi's birthday (2 October) in 2014. One of the goals of the campaign is to rid India of open defecation by Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birthday in 2019.

In keeping with its aim to address urgent issues in South Asia, the Singapore-based Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) convened a two-day workshop on *India's Worlds of Waste* on 27 and 28 July 2015. The ISAS workshop brought eight leading Indian authorities on waste management to Singapore, where they discussed their work and research. They also heard presentations on waste-management in Singapore. The eight participants from India, who collectively have more than 150 years' experience in aspects of public sanitation, brought to the workshop a remarkable variety of perspectives and expertise.

The key people in the management of garbage and sewage in India are those at base of the waste pyramid: the millions of waste-pickers and manual scavengers who deal with solid- and liquid-waste every day. At the Singapore workshop, Shibu K Nair, Director of Sustainable Resource Use and Management for Thanal, a non-governmental organisation based in Thiruvananthapuram (<http://thanal.co.in/>), explained the "huge walls" in people's minds created by ideas of caste

and gender. Dalits (known as Scheduled Castes in official language and formerly as "untouchables") are the majority of waste workers at the bottom of the pyramid, and women play a major role in most aspects of waste removal. Mr Nair emphasised that the association of waste with low-caste status sets up "barriers to public participation" in programmes to manage waste.

Millions of people scrape a living from handling waste in ways that may not be environmentally effective but which bring them small incomes. Recognising this fact, participants in the workshop were largely agreed that systems to deal with India's mounting volumes of waste needed to include waste-pickers and scavengers, improve their conditions and dignity and bring them into systematic waste-management programmes.

In countries like the United States of America and Canada, private corporations handle much of urban waste under various arrangements with local governments. Waste Management, Inc., the largest North American waste-management company, ranked No. 207 on Fortune magazine's list of the 500 largest companies in 2015. Its annual revenues were US\$ 14 billion. India's largest waste-management company is small in comparison. M S Goutham Reddy, Chief Executive Officer of Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd of Hyderabad (<http://ramkyenviroengineers.com>), told the workshop that his company had been working in waste-management

for fewer than 20 years and operated in fewer than 20 towns and cities. He estimated that India generates about 200,000 tonnes of waste a day or 73 million tonnes a year. Most of this is not handled in accordance with India's Solid Waste Management Rules, an admirable document in theory, laid down by the Supreme Court in 2000. He argued for the need of state and national governments to help local governments to finance Public Private Partnerships to better organise waste-management.

India's municipalities and municipal corporations are responsible for managing the waste created by their inhabitants. Local governments were enshrined in the Constitution with the 73rd and 74th Amendments of 1993, but most are under-resourced both in funds and appropriately trained staff. Participants referred to the shortage of shared knowledge of waste-management options among local-government representatives and officials.

Shubhagato Dasgupta, who leads a research programme on public sanitation at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi, pointed out that India lacks widely understood standards for calculating the costs of handling various types of waste (<http://www.cprindia.org/people/shubhagato-dasgupta>).

Different kinds of garbage have different potential. Harsha Anantharaman from the Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action



A session in progress during the ISAS workshop on "India's Worlds of Waste", held in Singapore on 27 and 28 July 2015. Professor Robin Jeffrey, Visiting Research Professor at ISAS, and author of this article is seated third from left (near the screen).

Group, Chennai (<http://www.cag.org.in/>) reported on one of the few comprehensive analyses of urban waste. Taking a single ward of Chennai, the survey analysed the composition of waste from more than 700 households over an extended period. The survey found that about 75 per cent of all the waste was biodegradable and that the quantity of plastic waste, though smaller than expected, would have a recyclable value of more than Rs 6,000 a day if properly cleaned and sorted.

Such findings are important for discovering effective solutions to India's growing urban waste. They suggest that local solutions at the Ward level (perhaps 10,000 households) can greatly reduce the pressure on large rubbish dumps like Deonar in Mumbai, Kodungaiyur in Chennai or Dhapa in Kolkata. Local composting to create fertiliser and methane gas, which can be used for power generation, offers the potential to handle the large proportion of kitchen- and biodegradable-waste coming from Indian homes and markets. Finding space in which to organise efficient recycling offers the opportunity to improve returns for traditional waste-

pickers, and to prevent plastic, paper and glass from going to landfills.

The workshop heard from Dr V Thiruppugazh about the requirements for successful rural toilet-building, a key aspect of the current "Clean India" campaign. He pointed to the need for shrewd education campaigns to convince people that a toilet was at least as desirable as a mobile phone. Demonstration and example were the most effective ways to change attitudes. A successful rural campaign required appealing toilets constructed by well-trained artisans. Shonky toilets were a sure way to undermine the goal of eradicating random defecation.

The workshop explored waste-management in Singapore. Fadil Supaat, Deputy Director of Waste and Resource Management Department at the National Environment Agency, explained Singapore's waste-management system, which relies heavily on four large high-temperature combustion incinerators (<http://www.nea.gov.sg/energy-waste/waste-management>). They generate electricity. The resulting ash, whose volume is 10 per cent of the original

waste, is transported to the island of Semakau where it is used as landfill to expand the island. Participants visited the Tuas South Incineration Plant to observe its working and to hear a presentation on the Semakau landfill project. It was observed that Singapore's waste contains less biodegradable matter than the waste of an Indian city. Participants concluded that large high-combustion incinerators were not likely to be appropriate for Indian conditions.

The workshop did not make concluding recommendations, but a few general propositions were put forward:

- high combustion incinerator plants are unsuitable for India
- many local governments lack sufficient finances and expertise to cope with growing volumes of waste
- millions of people, who earn small incomes from waste, need to be incorporated into systems that improve incentives and dignity and deal with waste comprehensively
- the most promising schemes for waste-management lie in locally-based systems. They create compost, methane gas and electricity from the decomposition of wet waste and provide facilities for efficient and rewarding recycling
- eliminating open defecation requires attitudinal change as well as dissemination of models of effective and appropriate buildings.

Professor Robin Jeffrey is Visiting Research Professor at ISAS. He can be contacted at isasrbj@nus.edu.sg.

The Muse of MIGRATION

LALDINKIMA SAILO



A group of Bangladeshi poets – migrant workers in Singapore – with ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, (second from left) and ISAS Director, Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra, (far right) after an “Evening of Migrant Poetry and Music”, organised by ISAS in Singapore on 26 April 2015.

The English poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, once wrote, *‘Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’*. This was evident at “An Evening of Migrant Poetry and Music – Poems of Migration: Joys and Sorrows” – an event of social outreach organised by ISAS on 26 April 2015, in partnership with Bangla Kantha, a literary organisation of artists and writers from the Bangladeshi migrant workers community in Singapore.

Six collections of poems were launched; some of the authors recited their songs. The books were launched by ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai. These books included *Probash Theke Bolchi* (I am speaking from abroad) by Jahangir Alam Babu; *Parijayi Bhalobasha*

(Migratory Love) by Md Robiul Hassan; *Biplober Bosonte* (In the Spring of Revolution) by Monir Ahmod; *Aadho Aalo Aadho Andhar* (Shades of Light and Dark) by Rajiv; *Eetis Peetis Premier Chara* (This, That, Rhymes of Love) by Hasnat Milon and *Chiro Sathi Shuchita* (Purity, the Forever Muse) by Shahidul Islam.

The poems explore the range of emotions and feelings that are experienced by migrant workers. They convey sentiments of loneliness, longing, belonging, love, travel, joys, disappointments, nostalgia and life. Some of those that dwell on life as migrant workers give a rich glimpse of the every-day highs and lows of working in a foreign country. The themes and

styles of writing connect the host country to the migrants’ home country.

At a time when the global discourse on migrant workers has focused on the economics of their services, the celebration of their works of literary art underlines the human aspect of this global process – a reservoir of commons that are intangible, insightful and delightful. In an age of heightened migration – whether it is transnational or intra-national, whether it is migration from the rural to urban areas; whether it is short-term expatriation or long-term immigration – the songs that touch on these themes find resonance in all of us.

ISAS Director, Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra, emphasised the need to establish close links between public policy and the vibrant cultures of South Asia. He said that a deeper understanding of culture would enrich the research on migration and the diaspora studies. Dr Kirpal Singh of the Wee Kim Wee Centre, Singapore Management University, narrated how his ancestors, who came to Singapore as migrant workers, participated in building a cosmopolitan and vibrant society.

Mr Laldinkima Sailo was until recently Research Associate at ISAS.

A Clear View FROM AFAR

MATTHEW KOO

In many ways, my internship programme at ISAS has exceeded my expectations. For a start, there is no typical day at ISAS, simply because there is no typical day in South Asia. To intern with ISAS is to immerse oneself in an intellectually stimulating ecosystem.

Besides the weekly meetings which provide an avenue for researchers to discuss and analyse the pressing issues of the day, my internship was often punctuated with academic workshops, symposiums and other South Asia-related events. Interning in a think-tank which is host to renowned academics and distinguished practitioners was an incredible opportunity and, together, this menu of activities has broadened my perspectives on the region.

Another key aspect of the internship experience was the institute’s collegial atmosphere. The questions and opinions from ISAS interns are taken seriously, and they are involved in the institute’s discussions and projects. The philosopher James Schall once remarked that the benefit of a liberal arts education is that it is “freeing”. Given the different backgrounds of my colleagues,

and the independence I was afforded to pursue my own research interests, it would not be farfetched to say that my time with ISAS was liberating too.

As a firm believer in the principle that research should be relevant to the public interest, my time at ISAS has reinforced my conviction that bridging the theory-policy divide can be achieved. In an increasingly globalised world, policy makers face hard choices.

ISAS has stepped up to this challenge by being one of the few think-tanks that focus exclusively on South Asia. Despite its small size, ISAS has actively sought to improve Singaporeans’ awareness of South Asia, while also facilitating stronger ties between South and Southeast Asia.

An excellent example was the Singapore Symposium 2015 in Chennai, India. I had the invaluable opportunity of assisting in the organisation of the symposium which was graced by Mr K Shanmugam, who was then Singapore’s Foreign Affairs and Law Minister. At the end of the day, it was clear to all delegates that the symposium had not only been a forum

for the sharing of best practices, but also the advancement of understanding between the two countries.

The Indian poet A K Ramanujan once wrote: *“You want self-knowledge? You should come to America. Just as the Mahatma had to go to jail and sit behind bars to write his autobiography. Or Nehru had to go to England to discover India. Things are clear only when looked at from a distance”*. Indeed, South Asia has become clearer to me during my time at ISAS in Singapore.

Photographs of KEY EVENTS



▲ Professor Tan Eng Chye, Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost of the National University of Singapore reading out the Citation of the *Outstanding Service Award* that was presented to ISAS Chairman, Ambassador Gopinath Pillai, who is also Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large, at the University Cultural Centre in Singapore on 24 April 2015. Ambassador Gopinath Pillai was honoured for his service to Singapore and the international community. He is also a recipient of Singapore's National Day Award, *The Meritorious Service Medal 2015*. In 2012, India conferred on him *Padma Shri*, a high civilian award.
Photo : By Special Arrangement

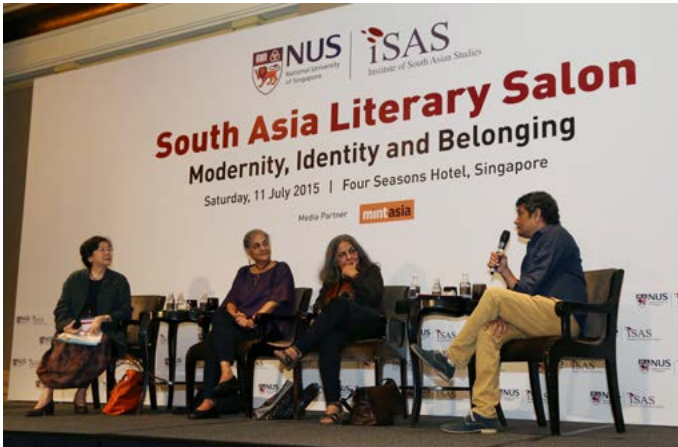
Mr Wong Ngit Liong, Chairman, NUS Board of Trustees, presenting the Award to Ambassador Gopinath Pillai.
Photo : By Special Arrangement



▲ Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore, Mr Tanveer A Khaskheli, (right) with Dr Siegfried Wolf of Heidelberg University at a seminar on "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor", organised by ISAS in Singapore on 17 August 2015.



▲ Bangladesh Cabinet Secretary, Mr M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, (left) at a an ISAS Dialogue Session in Singapore on 21 August 2015. ISAS Principal Research Fellow and former Foreign Advisor (Foreign Minister) of Bangladesh, Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, presided.



▲ A panel discussion during South Asia Literary Salon, organised by ISAS in Singapore on 11 July 2015.



▲ At the launch of *Media at Work in China and India: Discovering and Dissecting* in New Delhi on 21 September 2015: Editors Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Co-lead (Politics and Governance) at ISAS, and Professor Robin Jeffrey, Visiting Research Professor at ISAS, (first and second from left) with (from left) Mr T K Lim, Singapore's High Commissioner to India; Mr Shyam Saran, India's former Foreign Secretary; and Professor Subrata Kumar Mitra, ISAS Director.
Photo : By Special Arrangement



▲ Mr Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, delivering ISAS Public Lecture in Singapore on 21 September 2015.
Photo : By Special Arrangement

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The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), established in July 2004, is an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore. ISAS is dedicated to the study of contemporary South Asia. Researchers at the Institute conduct long-term and in-depth studies focused on social, political and economic trends and developments in South Asia and their impact beyond the immediate region. In addition, ISAS produces regular up-to-date and time-sensitive analyses of key issues and events in South Asia. ISAS disseminates its research output to policy makers, the academia, business community and civil society.

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