

Seminar  
*on*

# INDIA AND THE ISLAND STATES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

## EVOLVING GEOPOLITICS AND SECURITY PERSPECTIVES



06 September 2022, 1200-1545 Hrs IST

Venue: Virtual



# CONTENTS

About ICWA .....	4
Concept Note .....	5
Programme .....	7
Bio-Profiles .....	11
<b>Inaugural Session</b> .....	12
<b>Session One:</b> Sri Lanka and Maldives .....	15
<b>Session Two:</b> Southwest Indian Ocean .....	21

## About ICWA

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) was established in 1943 by a group of eminent intellectuals led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. H.N. Kunzru. Its principal objective was to create an Indian perspective on international relations and act as a repository of knowledge and thinking on foreign policy issues. An Act of Parliament in 2001 declared the ICWA to be an 'institution of national importance'. The ICWA is headquartered in Sapru House, an iconic heritage building in the heart of New Delhi that was inaugurated by the first Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1955. The council today conducts policy research through an in-house faculty as well as through external experts. It regularly organizes an array of intellectual activities including conferences, seminars, roundtable discussions, bilateral dialogues, international conferences, lectures and outreach activities in India and abroad and brings out a range of publications. The Council has a well-stocked library, an active website, and publishes the journal 'India Quarterly'. ICWA has over 50 MoUs with international think tanks and research institutions to promote better understanding in international issues and develop areas of mutual cooperation. The Council also has partnerships with leading research institutions, think tanks and universities in India.

## Concept Note

In the evolving geopolitics, the strategic importance of Indian Ocean island states has gone up significantly. As the region is emerging as a key fulcrum of international politics in the 21st century, major, extra-regional powers are making active efforts to gain a foothold in the Indian Ocean. In this context, the role and position of smaller yet strategically important island states are critical. The competition between major powers for expanding their strategic influence and security presence has given these smaller states with bargaining power and they are able to leverage their strategically critical location, to maximize their gains.

The security presence in the form of military bases, listening posts, naval monitoring stations, joint military exercises, and/or logistics support facilities will enhance the ability of the naval forces to operate in the Indian Ocean. It will also help in monitoring the sea lanes, which are crucial for global energy and economic security, passing through the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the rise in non traditional security threats such as piracy, terrorism, IUU fishing is posing a challenge to the regional security and stability. In the back drop of global geopolitical shifts and great power rivalry, external powers are seeking to establish a foothold in the region. Increasing interest of Quad and AUKUS member-states in enhancing their foothold in the region is also seen as a counter to China's assertive presence in the region. The great power politics in the Indian Ocean is also generating new vulnerabilities for the island states. In this context of increasing presence of major powers and the sharpening strategic rivalries, India's engagement with the island states of the Indian Ocean is taking shape.

The reverberations of India's rise as an economic and military, especially naval, power is felt across the region. India perceives itself

as a net security provider in the region and “preferred security partner” for the Indian Ocean states both in traditional and non traditional security realm. The island states have looked up to India for support as a first responder. India has sought to respond to calls for assistance, be it the water emergency in the Maldives or the relief efforts in the wake of a cyclone in Madagascar. Therefore, it would be interesting to understand and locate the Indian Ocean Island states in India’s foreign policy.

India has been vigorously engaging with the Indian Ocean Island states as part of its SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative. India is engaging with Sri Lanka and Maldives as part of Neighbourhood First policy. In the last few months, it has extended considerable help to Sri Lanka to tide over the economic crisis. In the case of Maldives, the relationship has strengthened and defence and security cooperation has emerged as a key building block of the relationship. Seychelles and Mauritius are important partners in India’s outreach to the Western Indian Ocean region. India’s Africa policy and Indian Ocean strategy converge in the Western Indian Ocean. Regular, high-level visits to Seychelles and Mauritius have deepened the relationship. Recently, Navy Chief visited Seychelles whereas the Prime Minister of Mauritius was in India for an extended, eight-day long visit. These visits underscore the importance that India attaches to these states. Madagascar, Comoros and French Indian Ocean territories too feature prominently in India’s engagement with the Southwest Indian Ocean.

The proposed conference seeks to discuss these and other related issues that affect the security dynamics of India and these island states.

# PROGRAMME

---

**Inaugural Session** 1200-1225 Hrs IST

---

1200-1205 Hrs IST

Opening Remarks

**Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh**

*Director General*

*Indian Council of World Affairs*

1205-1225 Hrs IST

Keynote Address by

**Dr. Sanjaya Baru**

*Member, Governing Body,*

*Indian Council of World Affairs*



## Session One: Sri Lanka and Maldives

1230-1355 Hrs IST

1230-1240 Hrs IST

Remarks by Chair

**Amb. Ashok Kantha**

*Former Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka*

1240-1255 Hrs IST

Remarks by

**Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)**

*Geopolitical Analyst, Strategic Advisor on Security and Author, Senior Fellow, The Millennium Project, Washington DC*

1255-1310 Hrs IST

Remarks by

**Mr. Athaulla A Rasheed (Maldives)**

*Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University, Former Diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

1310-1325 Hrs IST

Remarks by

**Dr. N. Manoharan**

*Director, Centre for East Asian Studies, Associate Professor of International Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru*

1325-1340 Hrs IST

Remarks by

**Vice Admiral (Retd.) M P Muralidharan**

*Former Director General, Indian Coast Guard*

1340-1355 Hrs IST

**Q & A**

---

**Session Two:** Southwest Indian Ocean 1400-1545 Hrs IST

---

1400-1410 Hrs IST	Remarks by Chair <b>Amb. Anup Mudgal</b> <i>Former Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius</i>
1410-1425 Hrs IST	Remarks by <b>Ms. Malshini Senaratne (Seychelles)</b> <i>Asst. Head of Department, Faculty of Business and Sustainable Development, University of Seychelles</i>
1425-1440 Hrs IST	Remarks by <b>Dr. Priya Bahadoor, (Mauritius)</b> <i>Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Mauritius</i>
1440-1455 Hrs IST	Remarks by <b>Dr. Juvence Ramasy (Madagascar)</b> <i>Lecturer, University of Toamasina, Madagascar</i>
1455-1510 Hrs IST	Remarks by <b>Prof. A. Subramanyam Raju</b> <i>Dean, International Relations, Professor &amp; Head, UMISARC &amp; Centre for South Asian Studies, Pondicherry University</i>
1510-1525 Hrs IST	Remarks by <b>Commodore (Retd) RS Vasan</b> <i>Director General, Chennai Centre for China Studies</i>
1525-1540 Hrs IST	<b>Q &amp; A</b>
1540-1545 Hrs IST	Vote of Thanks <b>Dr. Nivedita Ray</b> <i>Director Research, Indian Council of World Affairs</i>

# **Bio-Profiles of Chairs and Speakers**

# Inaugural Session



## **Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh**

Director General,  
Indian Council of World Affairs

Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh holds a Master's degree in Economics from Himachal Pradesh University. She joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1985. Her first posting was in Embassy of India in Madrid, Spain, where she later went as Deputy Chief of Mission in 2006. She worked in the Ministry of External Affairs from 1989 to 1999, handling India's relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan. She was posted as Counsellor in the Embassy of India in Kabul from 2003 to 2005.

She has had multilateral experience, particularly in economic and environmental issues. She was Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York from 2000 to 2003. She has served as Joint Secretary to the President of India from August 2007 to August 2012 and as Joint Secretary at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) from 2012 to 2013. She has been High Commissioner of India to Singapore from 2013 to 2016 and Ambassador of India to Ireland from 2016 to 2018.

For two years from 2018, she was Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and retired in September 2020. She took over as the DG of ICWA in July 2021.



## **Dr. Sanjaya Baru**

Member Governing Body,  
Indian Council of World Affairs

Dr. Sanjaya Baru is Distinguished Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis (MP-IDSA) & United Service Institution of India (USI). He has been editor of India's major financial newspapers, The Economic Times, Financial Express and Business Standard. He was Media Advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Director for Geo-economics and Strategy, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London. He was professor of economics at University of Hyderabad, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore. He was Secretary-General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry. His publications include The Strategic Consequences of India's Economic Rise, India and the World: Essays on Geo-economics and Foreign Policy, The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh and 1991: How PV Narasimha Rao Made History and The Bombay Plan: A Blueprint for Economic Resurgence (2018).

# **Session One: Sri Lanka and Maldives**



## **Amb. Ashok Kantha**

Former Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka

Amb. Ashok K. Kantha joined as Director of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi on 31st March 2017. A career diplomat, Kantha was Ambassador of India to China until January 2016. Prior to this, he was Secretary (East) at Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi with responsibility for about 65 countries in India's extended neighbourhood. His previous assignments include High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka and Malaysia, Consul General in Hong Kong, Deputy Chief of Mission in Kathmandu (Nepal), and Joint Secretary (East Asia) in Ministry of External Affairs. Earlier, Kantha served in different capacities at Indian Missions in Singapore, China and the USA, and at headquarters in New Delhi. In his diplomatic career spanning over 38 years, Kantha specialized in Asian affairs, with a particular focus on China. Apart from three assignments in China, he served as Joint Secretary (East Asia) and Director (China) at Ministry of External Affairs for periods of four years each, closely involved in the formulation and implementation of India's foreign policy in respect of China and East Asia. He has an advanced certificate in Chinese language from National University of Singapore.





## **Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)**

Geopolitical Analyst, Strategic Advisor on Security and Author, Senior Fellow, The Millennium Project, Washington DC

Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera is an international security and geopolitics analyst and strategic advisor from Sri Lanka. He has led two government think tanks providing strategic advocacy. With almost two decades of experience in the government sector in advisory positions to working at foreign policy and defence think tanks, he was the Founding Director General of the National Security Think Tank under the Ministry of Defence (INSSSL) until January 2020. Earlier, he served as Executive Director at Kadirgamar Institute (LKIRSS).

Asanga's forthcoming book is on Sri Lanka's geopolitical challenges Conundrum of an Island (World Scientific, Singapore). He is the author of Sri Lanka at Crossroads (2019) and Towards a Better World Order (2015). Asanga served as a Visiting Professor for Geopolitics and Global Leadership (NKU, USA), Visiting Lecturer for International Security (Colombo University, Sri Lanka), International Political Economy (University of London in Colombo RIC). Asanga is the node chair for the Millennium Project Foresight Initiative Global Think Tank (Washington DC) and Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.



## **Mr. Athaulla A Rasheed (Maldives)**

Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University, former diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Athaulla A Rasheed is a doctoral scholar from the Australian National University. His academic scholarship at the Department of Pacific Affairs of Australian National University covers developing frameworks for climate security in small island developing states and their implications for regional and international security cooperation. Athaulla also has published in many international peer-reviewed and policy journals, covering Maldives and geopolitical competitions in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, including the implications of climate security in Indo-Pacific island nations. He undertakes academic roles at ANU and has academic and policy affiliations with the Pacific and Indian Ocean agencies. Athaulla has also formerly worked as a diplomat and foreign service officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Maldives. He has had long-standing professional and academic expertise in Maldives' politics and governance.



## Dr. N. Manoharan

Director, Centre for East Asian Studies, Associate Professor, Department of International Studies, Political Science & History, Christ University, Bangalore

Dr. N. Manoharan is Director, Centre for East Asian Studies and an Associate Professor of International Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru. He earlier served at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), PMO, New Delhi. He was South Asia Fellow at the East-West Center Washington and is a recipient of Mahbub-ul Haq international award for research.

His areas of interest include internal security, terrorism, Sri Lanka, Maldives, human rights, ethnic conflicts, multiculturalism, security sector reforms and conflict resolution.

### **His main books include:**

- Developing Democracies, Counter-terror Laws and Security: Lessons from India and Sri Lanka;
- ‘Security Deficit’: A Comprehensive Internal Security Strategy for India;
- India’s War on Terror;
- SAARC: Towards Greater Connectivity;
- Ethnic Violence and Human Rights in Sri Lanka; and
- Counterterrorism Legislation in Sri Lanka: Evaluating Efficacy.

His forthcoming book is on Federal Aspects of Foreign Policy: The Role of Tamil Nadu Fishermen Issue in India-Sri Lanka Relations (Routledge). He writes regularly for leading newspapers, websites and reputed peer-reviewed international journals.



## **Vice Admiral (Retd.) M P Muralidharan**

Former Director General, Indian Coast Guard

Vice Admiral M.P.Muralidharan, an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jan 1975. He is a specialist in Navigation and Direction and also holds a post graduate degree in Defence Studies. In a career of almost four decades, the Admiral has held several key Operational and Staff appointments. He has commanded three warships including the Guided Missile Destroyer Ranvijay and has been Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet and Principal Director of Naval Operations at the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Navy). He was also Directing staff at Defence Services Staff College (Wellington), Naval Assistant to the Chief of the Naval Staff and Naval Attaché, at the Embassy of India, Moscow.

On elevation to Flag Rank, as Rear Admiral he was the Flag Officer Sea Training at Kochi, Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command at Mumbai and also held the operational appointment of the Flag Officer Commanding, Maharashtra and Gujarat Naval Area. On promotion to Vice Admiral, he became the first commandant of the Indian Naval Academy at Ezhimala. Subsequently, he became the Chief of Personnel at Naval Headquarters prior to taking over as the 19th Director General of the Indian Coast Guard from where he retired in Feb 2013.

# **Session Two: Southwest Indian Ocean**



## **Amb. Anup Mudgal**

Former Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius

Amb. Anup K. Mudgal, a member of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), retired in May 2016 as India's High Commissioner to Mauritius. As part of his diplomatic career, spanning thirty two years, he served thrice at the Headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs handling relations with India's neighborhood, ASEAN region, Russian Federation and some countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as issues relating to Human Resource Development.

As part of his eight assignments abroad, Amb. Mudgal served in different capacities at the Indian Missions in Mexico (including NAFTA matters), Peru, former Yugoslavia, Belgium (including EU matters), Germany, Austria (work relating to: IAEA, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOOSA, UNCITRAL), and Mauritius (including IORA).

Post retirement, Amb Mudgal has been engaged in several voluntary assignments, the important ones being: Member, FICCI Task Force on Blue Economy; Member, Steering Committee on Blue Economy under PMEAC, and chaired a working group on security, strategic dimensions, and international engagement; Member, Core Team of Kalinga International Foundation; ex-Chair, Diaspora Committee, ARSP; Former Joint Secretary, Association of Indian Diplomats; Guest lectures at various higher education and professional institutes.



## **Ms. Malshini Senaratne (Seychelles)**

Asst. Head of Department, Faculty of Business & Sustainable Development, University of Seychelles

Ms. Malshini Senaratne is the Assistant Head of Department within the Faculty of Business and Sustainable Development at the University of Seychelles, and a Director with Eco-Sol Consulting Seychelles. With a background in economics, business and development studies, she has published extensive research pertaining to the Blue Economy for the Observer Research Foundation, the Journal of Indian Ocean Region and the Seychelles Research Journal. Malshini is presently a PhD candidate in the Islands and Small States programme at the University of Malta.



## **Dr. Priya Bahadoor (Mauritius)**

Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Mauritius

Priya Bahadoor has completed PhD from the Université de La Réunion Masters in Historical Studies (By Research) from the University of Mauritius. She is currently teaching History on a 2 years contract at the University of Mauritius under the Department of History and Political Science.





## **Dr. Juvence Ramasy (Madagascar)**

Lecturer, University of Toamasina, Madagascar

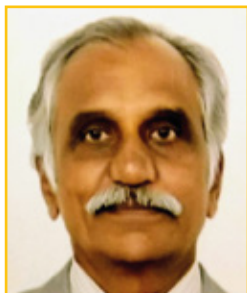
Political and Electoral Expert, Juvence is in Support of the PACTE Project in Madagascar. Juvence is a lecturer at the University of Toamasina, Madagascar, where he teaches constitutional law. He is a PhD in political sciences from the University Toulouse 1 Capitole, France. His thesis was on the thematic: "State and implementation of democracy in the islands of the southwest Indian Ocean: the case of Madagascar and Mauritius." He has been a visiting scholar at the Institute of Diplomacy of China in 2011. In 2012, he was Visiting Professor at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Lyon (France) and at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Toulouse (France). In 2013, he was a Visiting Scholar African Studies near the center of Leiden (Netherlands). He has participated in several scientific conferences where he presented about political and electoral issues relating to Madagascar. Finally, he has published several articles on the process of democratization in the Malagasy context. His current research focuses on issues of state, elites, military, elections and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa.



## **Prof. A. Subramanyam Raju**

Dean, International Relations, Professor & Head,  
UMISARC & Centre for South Asian Studies,  
Pondicherry University

Adluri Subramanyam Raju is Professor and former Head of the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute of South Asia Regional Cooperation (UMISARC) and Centre for South Asian Studies and Coordinator of the UGC Centre for Maritime Studies at Pondicherry University, India. He is the recipient of the Mahbub ul Haq Award (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka), the Scholar of Peace Award (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace, New Delhi, 2002) and the Kodikara Award (Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 1998). He was a Salzburg Seminar Fellow (2006). He received the National Best Teacher Award (C.V.S. Krishnamurthy Theja Charities, Tirupati, 2017) and Best Teacher Award twice (Pondicherry University, 2013 and 2018). He is a member of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Third Task Force on Blue Economy. He was previously a visiting fellow at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is on the editorial boards of five journals.



## **Commodore (Retd) RS Vasan**

Director, Chennai Centre for China Studies

An Alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, the Naval War College and the International Visitor Leadership Programme, Commodore Seshadri Vasan has a distinguished service of over 34 years in the Navy and the Coast Guard. His appointments include command of warships, two major air stations and a maritime air squadron. He has participated both in the 1971 war and IPKF operations. He was an instructor at the Naval War College, India. Prior to retirement, he was the Regional Commander of the Indian Coast Guard Region East overseeing EEZ Patrol, SAR, Anti-Piracy, Fisheries protection, Maritime Border Control, Marine Pollution prevention and other maritime tasks in the Bay of Bengal.

Post retirement he has served in many think tanks and is a regular speaker at many International and national conferences. He was also the Chairman of Aeronautical Society of India, Chennai Charter And the Director of the Asian Bureau of the World Border Police .He has many publications to his credit in journals, websites, edited books and media.

The think tanks that he has served in include the Observer Research Foundation where he steered the Maritime Security Programme and The Center for Asia Studies where he was the Head Strategy and Security Studies. He is presently the Director General of the Chennai Centre of China Studies, the Regional Director of the National Maritime Foundation Tamil Nadu and the President of the Navy Foundation

Chennai Chapter. He is also a visiting faculty at the Indian Maritime University, Academy of Maritime Education and Training, Great Lakes Institute of Management and Hindustan Institute of Engineering Technology. He is also on the Board of Advisors at the Madras University, the Stella Maris College and the Pondicherry University.

# **Vote of Thanks**



## **Dr. Nivedita Ray**

Director Research,  
Indian Council of World Affairs

Dr. Nivedita Ray is Director Research Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi. She has done her PhD in African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her area of specialization includes African Affairs, Diaspora Studies, Gender and Conflict Resolution, Political and Security Risk Analysis. Her recent publications include India and East Africa, Viz India Books, New Delhi March 2015, New Delhi; Co-Edited book on Tagore the Eternal Seeker: Footprints of a World Traveller, Viz India Books , New Delhi May 2015; Edited book on Africa and India: A Partnership for Development and Growth, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 2012.





**06 September 2022**

**Sapru House**

**New Delhi**