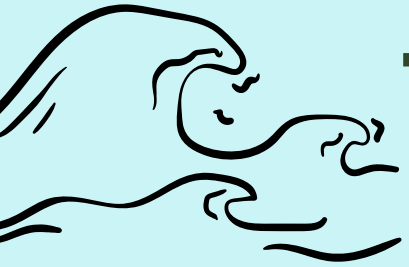


**Global Order**

Foreign Affairs | Policy | Politics | Business



# SAMUDRAMANTHAN



**The Bay of Bengal Seminar**

**powered by Yogayatan Group**



## SEMINAR BOOKLET

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Time: 9:30-5:30**

**Venue: India International Centre  
Annexe**



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## ABOUT THE NMF

*“To be the foremost resource centre for the development and advocacy of strategies for the promotion and protection of India’s maritime interests”*

The genesis of the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi, lies in a long-felt need to redress India’s historical neglect of its maritime domain. The necessity to address the multifarious disciplines, themes, subjects and nuances that make up not merely ‘naval’ power (sea power) but that constitute comprehensive ‘maritime’ power, was well recognised by the Indian Navy and fully endorsed by the Government of India.

The NMF was accordingly established, in 2005, as the nation’s first maritime think-tank for the conduct of independent and policy-relevant research on all ‘matters maritime’. It was, from its very inception, designed to create and heighten maritime awareness amongst India’s policy-makers, intellectual echelons, and civil society at large. Towards this end, it was to be a policy-relevant research organisation of acknowledged excellence that would not only undertake serious, cutting-edge maritime research of its own but would also provide a common platform for advocacy, discourse, and debate, between maritime-related national and international institutions, organisations, and academic establishments, as also reputed and renowned individuals, professionals, and practitioners the world over.

The Foundation was inaugurated on the 15th of February, 2005, by the then Defence Minister of India, the late Dr Pranab Mukherjee, who went on to become the Honourable President of the Republic of India. While the NMF is an independent and autonomous think-tank, its intellectual and organisational development is supported by the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy. Over the years that have elapsed since its inception, the NMF has grown rapidly from an embryonic manifestation of India’s maritime renaissance into an effervescent, globally respected, and renowned intellectual institution with robust academic linkages within the country as well as overseas.



## ABOUT THE GLOBAL ORDER

*“To shape global conversations through rigorous, independent, and forward-looking analysis on geopolitics, economics, culture, and society, through a distinctly Indian and Indo-Pacific lens.”*

Global Order was born out of a growing realisation that conversations around geopolitics, economics, security, and culture have long been shaped largely by Western perspectives and intellectual frameworks. At a time when the Indo-Pacific is steadily emerging as the world’s strategic and economic centre of gravity, the need for a platform that could examine global developments from an Indian and broader non-Western standpoint became impossible to ignore. It was against this backdrop that Global Order was established in 2020 as a multidisciplinary platform dedicated to ideas, research, and analysis that is independent, accessible, and globally relevant.

Co-founded by Hindol Sengupta and Rishi Suri, the organisation was envisioned as a bridge between academic research, policy discourse, and public engagement. Supported by a wider network of editors, researchers, advisors, and contributors based across New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, London, and Canberra, Global Order seeks to foster diverse perspectives while maintaining a clear focus on emerging global transformations.

Since its inception, Global Order has aimed to provide “fresh takes with fresh outlooks” on global affairs, public policy, national security, technology, climate change, economics, diplomacy, and culture. Functioning as a think tank, research platform, and digital publication, it brings together policymakers, scholars, practitioners, journalists, and emerging voices to encourage informed dialogue on major international developments through articles, interviews, podcasts, and strategic commentary.

Over time, Global Order has emerged as a dynamic and outward-looking institution that reflects India’s growing confidence in engaging with—and helping shape—the evolving international order.



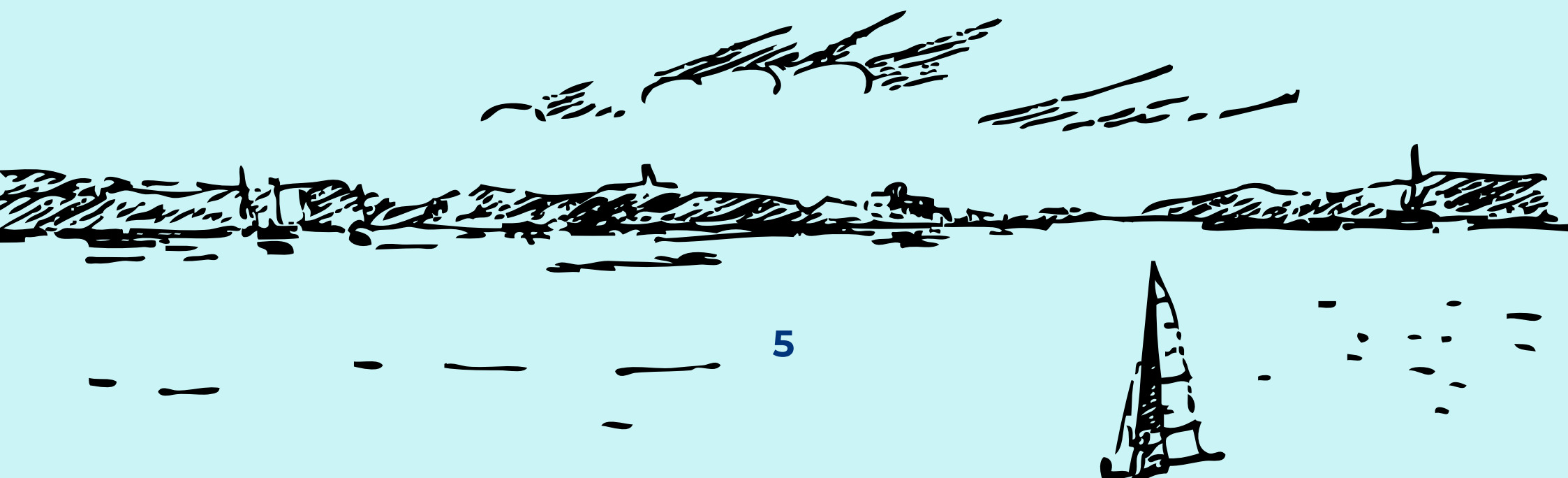
# CONCEPT NOTE

## “THE BAY OF BENGAL AS A REGION FOR CO-OPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT” (SAMUDRAMANTHAN-2026)

From the perspective of holistic maritime security as also from those of development and of sustainability, the criticality of what might be termed as the “Greater Bay of Bengal” — a predominantly maritime sub-regional geography that incorporates (in alphabetical order) Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand — can hardly be overstated. Indeed, the Bay of Bengal is no longer merely a geographic space separating South and South-East Asia, but an increasingly consequential arena linking the wider Indo-Pacific through trade, transport, connectivity, security, and blue-economy interactions.

The contemporary importance of the Bay is rooted in three overlapping realities. First, it is a vital strategic and maritime space in which sea lines of communication, port-led development, energy flows, and regional security concerns intersect. Second, the Bay connects littoral and hinterland States alike, making connectivity a matter not only of maritime infrastructure but also of roads, railways, inland waterways, logistics chains, and transit arrangements that bear directly upon the developmental prospects of both coastal and landlocked countries. Third, the subregion faces a growing spectrum of non-traditional challenges, including climate-related disasters, environmental stress, smuggling and trafficking networks, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and intensifying competition over marine resources.

In recent years, regional and extra-regional powers have sought to respond to these pressures, albeit unevenly. Importantly BIMSTEC has acquired renewed relevance as a bridge between South and South-East Asia, with its Charter giving legal expression to the organisation’s wider role, with the “BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity” offering a ten-year framework within which to improve sub-regional linkages. At the same time, the relationship between BIMSTEC and wider Indian Ocean institutions such as IORA remains under-examined, particularly with regard to mandate, scope, overlap, and the capacity to shape practical norms in the Bay of Bengal space.

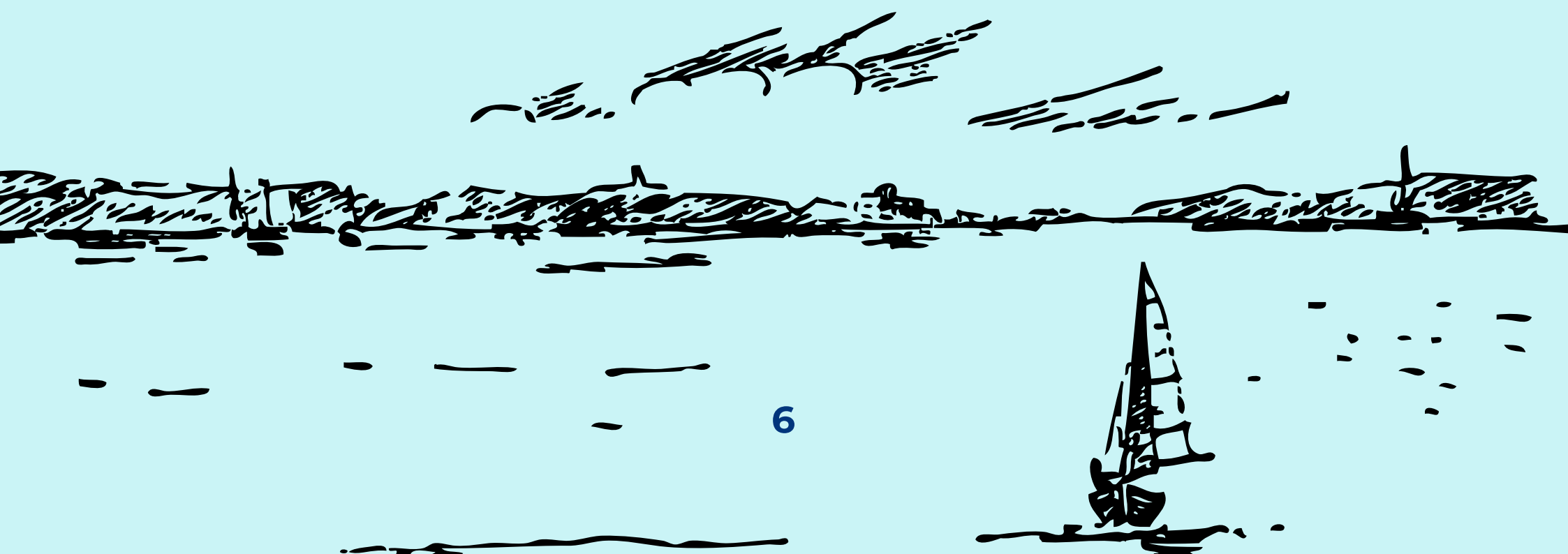


Being seized of the criticality of these facts, the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), in conjunction with Global Order, will convene a sharply focused, day-long seminar in New Delhi on 14 May 2026, on the strategic significance of the Bay of Bengal.

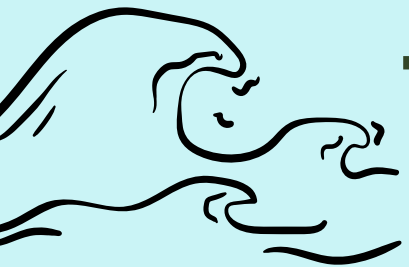
This seminar — which is expected to be the inaugural edition of an annual series of convening mechanisms incorporating conferences, symposiums, workshops, and seminars — seeks to provide a focused platform for informed discussion among policy practitioners, scholars, officials, maritime professionals, and subject-matter experts. Through its deliberations, it aims to assess the strategic, economic, ecological, and institutional dimensions of the Greater Bay of Bengal; to examine the opportunities and limitations of existing regional frameworks; and to generate policy-relevant insights on how maritime security, connectivity, and sustainable development may be pursued in an integrated manner.

The seminar will launch discussions that address a host of relevant issues: analysing the BIMSTEC Master Connectivity Plan; port infrastructure, scale, competitiveness, and resilience; perspectives on multi-modal connectivity from landlocked countries; development of Galathea Bay and its regional implications; correlating geography and regional stability; climate, environmental security, and disaster preparedness in the Bay; smuggling and trafficking and their implications for regional security; IUU fishing and resource conflicts; BIMSTEC as a norm-setter in the region; IORA and the Bay of Bengal: mandates, limits, and challenges; lessons from ASEAN-led cooperation for the wider Bay region; and the role of Track 1.5 and Track 2 platforms in the Bay of Bengal.

By bringing these themes into a single conversation, the seminar intends to move beyond compartmentalised approaches to the Bay of Bengal. It will, instead, advance a more holistic understanding of the region as a shared strategic and developmental space in which maritime order, infrastructural connectivity, ecological security, and institutional cooperation are deeply interlinked. The discussions will contribute to a sharper appreciation of the policy choices required for building a stable, connected, resilient, and sustainable Greater Bay of Bengal and will yield, as a specific deliverable, a policy-relevant White Paper that is of lasting relevance to all States operating in this vital geography.



# SAMUDRAMANTHAN



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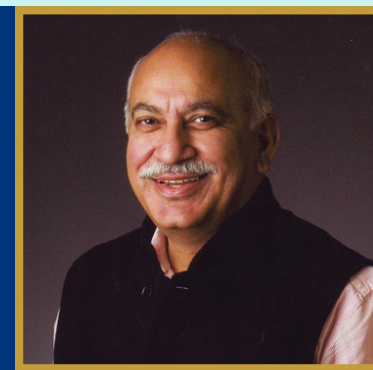


## SPEAKER PROFILES



## Mr MJ Akbar

Former MoS for External Affairs



Mr MJ Akbar is a veteran journalist, author, and former diplomat. He previously served as Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India and was a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha. With a distinguished career in journalism, he has held senior editorial positions at leading publications and was the founding editor of newspapers such as The Asian Age and The Sunday Guardian.

Akbar began his career with The Times of India and later rose to prominence as editor of The Telegraph and India Today. Over the decades, he has been widely recognised for shaping modern Indian journalism through his editorial leadership and political commentary.

An accomplished author, Akbar has written several books on history, politics, and international relations, including India: The Siege Within and Tinderbox: The Past and Future of Pakistan. His work often explores themes of identity, nationalism, and India's engagement with the world.

In public life, Akbar has combined journalism with politics and diplomacy, contributing to India's foreign policy discourse while continuing to write and comment on global affairs.



**VAdm Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM**  
Director General, NMF



Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM, is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, the Defence Services Staff College, the Naval War College, and the National Defence College. He holds BSc, MSc, and MPhil degrees.

After an illustrious four-decade long career in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy, during which he was commended three times by the Hon'ble President of India, he retired on 30 November 2013. He is now the Director-General of the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi — India's foremost resource centre for developing and advocating strategies that promote and protect the nation's maritime interests.

Since retirement, he has remained an active thought-leader and leadership mentor. He serves on the visiting faculty of higher-command establishments of all three defence services, as well as tri-service institutions such as the College of Defence Management, Hyderabad, and the National Defence College, New Delhi. He also advises the government through regular engagement with the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Navy), the Ministry of External Affairs, and the National Security Council Secretariat. A prolific writer with over ninety-five published papers and articles, he is also an Adviser and Fellow of several leading think tanks.



## Prof (Dr) Hindol Sengupta

Director and Co-founder, Global Order

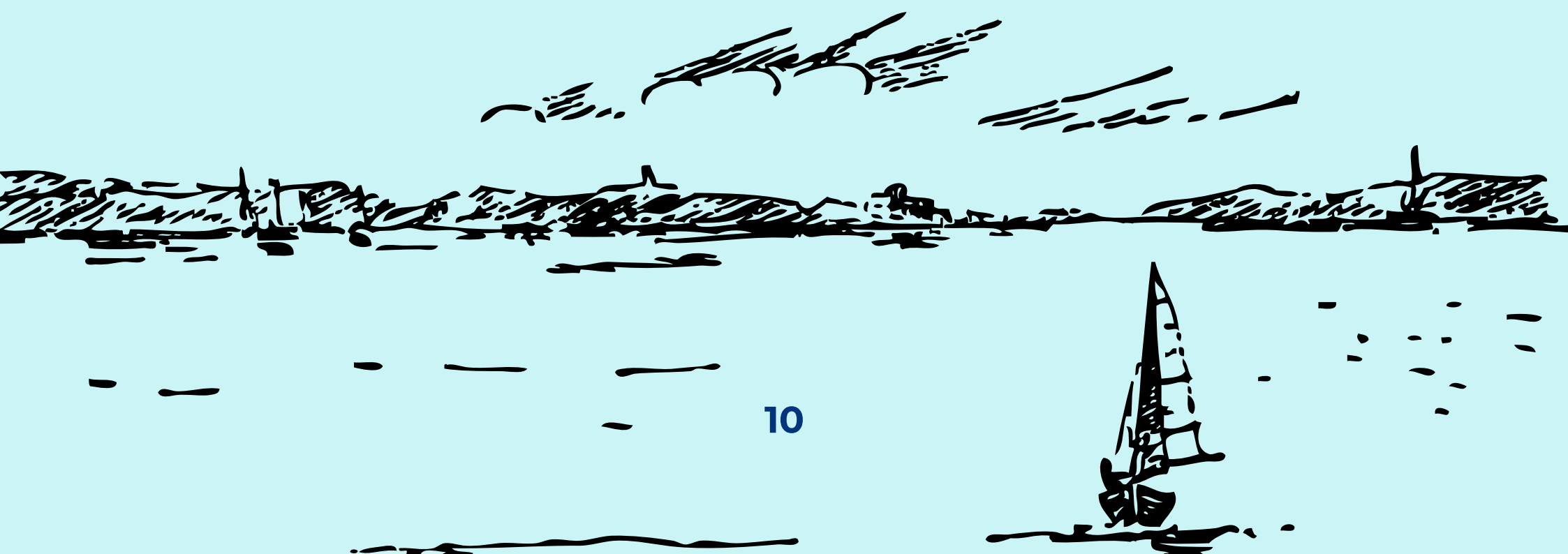


Prof (Dr) Hindol Sengupta is the Director of Global Order and Professor and Executive Dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs, and Director of the Jindal India Institute. A historian, author, and policy expert, his work examines India's rise through the intersections of international relations, history, economics, and culture.

He holds a PhD in International Relations from the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, along with degrees from Worcester College, Oxford, Jamia Millia Islamia, and the University of Delhi, and was a Knight-Bagehot Fellow at Columbia University.

Dr Sengupta is a multiple award-winning author of 13 books and has held key roles including Vice President at Invest India. A World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, he has contributed widely to leading global publications and media.

His research focuses on comparative statehood, civilizational states, nuclear conflict, multiculturalism, religion in international relations, and technology's impact on sovereignty.



**RAdm Mukul Asthana, NM (Retd)**  
Member, Advisory Board, Global Order



Rear Admiral Mukul Asthana, NM (Retd), is a veteran Flag Officer of the Indian Navy with over 40 years of distinguished service across the Merchant Marine and naval aviation. An accomplished aviator, he has served on five merchant vessels, commanded four warships, led India's largest Naval Air Station, and flown eight aircraft types.

He commanded INS Tarangini, representing India at 28 international ports while training officer cadets, and later served as the professional head of Naval Aviation, overseeing over 16,000 personnel and driving capability enhancement and long-term planning through 2032.

He also served as Director General of a major naval infrastructure project, contributing to the development of a strategic naval base, and was a member of key Ministry of Defence committees on security infrastructure. An alumnus of premier military institutions, his expertise spans strategic studies, international relations, and defence capability development.



## Amb Riva Ganguly Das

Former Secretary (East), MEA,  
Distinguished Fellow, CSDR



Ambassador Riva Ganguly Das joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1986. She is a Postgraduate in Political Science from Delhi University. Ambassador Das started her career with a posting in Madrid and went on to do several postings in Europe including to The Hague as Deputy Chief of Mission and as Ambassador to Romania, Albania and Moldova. She has been Consul General in two important financial capitals of the world Shanghai and New York.

Ambassador Das has handled India's relations with Nepal, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Consular & Passport issues and Public Diplomacy at headquarters. She was also posted as Director General of Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Ambassador Das has extensive experience of multilateral Diplomacy and has participated in many environmental negotiations, particularly climate change. As Alternate Permanent Representative of India to the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at The Hague she has worked on Non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

Ambassador Das has done two postings in Dhaka, first from 1999 to 2002 as Counsellor ( Press and Information ) and Head of the Cultural Centre and later as the High Commissioner. Prior to her retirement in 2021 Ambassador Das was Secretary (East) in Ministry of External Affairs.

After retirement Ambassador Das has joined the Governing Council of Asian Confluence a think tank based in Shillong. She is also a Distinguished Fellow at Council for Strategic and Defence Research (CSDR) based in Delhi. She was elected Member of the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council for 2024- 2026 term. Since retirement she is also actively working with educational and community organisations.

## Dr Ameya Pratap Singh

Managing Director, Yogayatan Group



Dr Ameya Pratap Singh is the Managing Director of the Yogayatan Group and Dharti Dredging and Infrastructure Limited. He is also the former Managing Editor of Statecraft, a digital platform focused on international affairs and strategic issues. His work and research are deeply centred on South Asian geopolitics, international relations, and India's foreign policy.

Dr Singh holds a DPhil (PhD) in Area Studies from the University of Oxford, where his doctoral research examined the rise and fall of trust in Sino-Indian relations. He also earned an MPhil in South Asian Studies from the University of Cambridge, an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a BA in Political Science from St Xavier's College Mumbai.

A scholar and commentator on Asian geopolitics, Dr Singh has contributed to discussions on India-China relations, strategic affairs, and regional diplomacy through academic publications and policy forums.



## Dr (Ms) Rupa Dutta

Former Principal Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), MoCI



Dr (Ms) Rupa Dutta is a distinguished Indian Economic Service (IES) officer of the 1986 batch with over four decades of experience in economic policy, trade strategy, and public administration. She has held several senior positions in the Government of India, including Principal Economic Adviser and Senior Adviser at the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, where she headed the G20 Cell and coordinated India's engagements with forums such as G20, B20, and Start-Up20.

Over the course of her career, Ms Dutta has contributed extensively to policy formulation in manufacturing, trade, consumer affairs, and export promotion. She has also served in the Department of Commerce India, advising on WTO issues and export development, and later worked with Export-Import Bank of India on MSME exports, cluster development, and the gems and jewellery sector.

A graduate of the University of Delhi and the Delhi School of Economics, she is currently pursuing doctoral research at Jawaharlal Nehru University on public health expenditure and development outcomes.



## Dr Sanjeev Ranjan

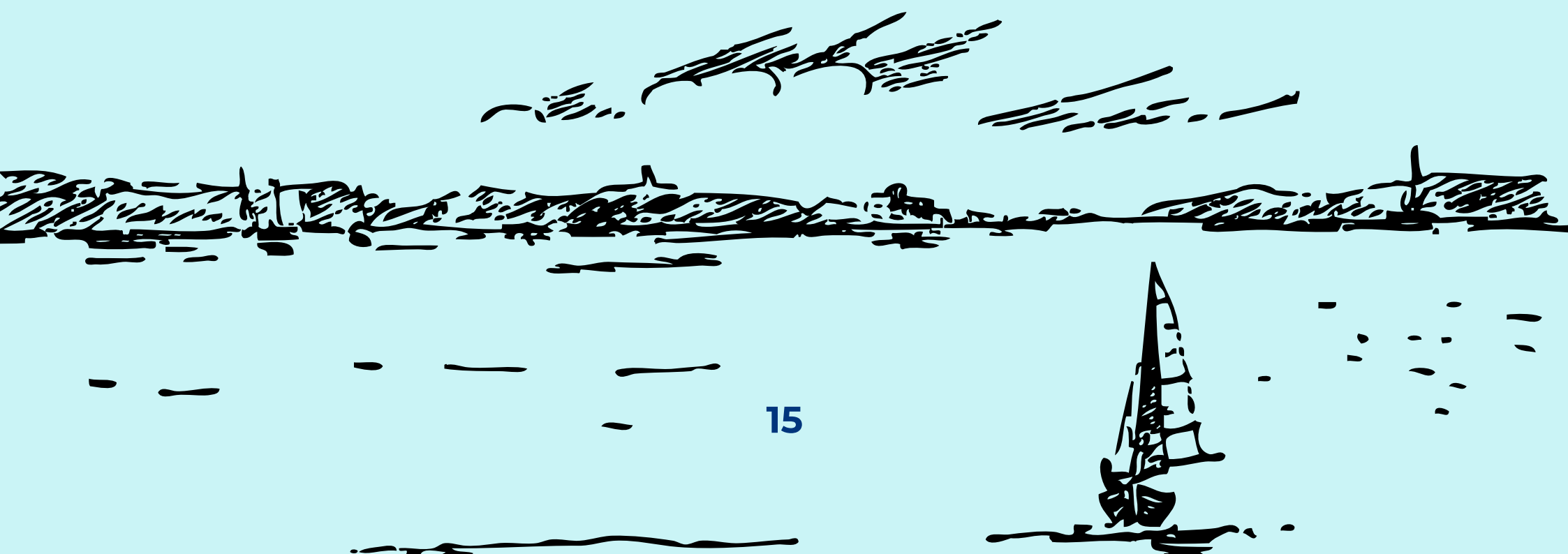
Former Chairman,  
National Shipping Board, MoPSW



Dr Sanjeev Ranjan has served in the Indian Administrative Service for over 35 years and has extensive experience in formulating public policy on finance, logistics, power and infrastructure development. He has previously served as Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and as Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and Chairman, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Dr Ranjan has also worked on national security infrastructure planning as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence and Secretary, Border Roads Development Board. As Director, Ministry of Heavy Industries, he was involved in the formulation of the “National Automobile Policy” and vision for “Making India into a Global Automotive Hub”. He has previously served as Chief Secretary in the Government of Tripura, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser in the Ministries of Road Transport and Highways, Shipping, and Tourism, Principal Secretary in the Departments of Power and Finance. He has also served on the Board of a number of Companies in the power, infrastructure and tourism sectors including NHIDCL, SCI, ITDC, OTPC, NEEPCO and NDDB.

Dr Ranjan received his BTech in Electrical Engineering from IIT, Kanpur, MBA from Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University and MPhil (Economic Development) from University of Glasgow, United Kingdom. Dr Ranjan completed his PhD on the impact of information technology use on efficiency in public sector enterprises at IIT, Delhi. He also received a degree in master’s in Public Management at the National University of Singapore. During the program, he was attached to the Monetary Authority of Singapore and studied the impact of 2008 economic crisis on Singapore’s growth as an international financial hub. He is an alumnus of the National Defence College, New Delhi. He was a National Talent Search Scholar and also a Lee Kuan Yew Fellow at Harvard University.



## Dr Prabir De

Professor,  
Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity, RIS



Dr Prabir De is a Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi. He has over three and half decades of full-time research and teaching experiences in India and abroad. He works in the field of international economics and has research interests in international trade and development issues.

He has been conducting policy research for the Government of India and several national and international organisations including UN agencies and multilateral development banks. He did his MSc in economics from the Calcutta University and PhD in economics from the Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He was a Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), Japan; Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI); Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP); and Visiting Senior Fellow of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

He has contributed several research papers in international journals and written books on trade and development. He is also the Founding Editor of the Journal of Asian Economic Integration, published by Sage.



## **RAdm Sandeep Singh Sandhu, NM** Senior Directing Staff (Navy), NDC



Rear Admiral Sandeep Singh Sandhu was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1991. The Flag Officer is specialised in Navigation and Direction and is a qualified naval diver. He has held a range of command, training and staff appointments, and has served on most classes of ships of the Indian Navy including the aircraft carrier Viraat. He has also been on deputation to Govt. of Mauritius wherein he was posted onboard an OPV and later he was O/ic of Marine Training Establishment of Mauritius Coast Guard.

He has commanded four ships including destroyer INS Delhi and his alma mater, i.e., Navigation & Direction (ND) School. As Asst Controller Carrier Projects & Asst. Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition at the Naval HQs he was responsible for operationalisation of INS Vikrant's air wing and overseeing construction of approx. 30 warships. Before assuming the appointment of SDS (Navy) at NDC, New Delhi he was Chief of Staff of Andaman & Nicobar Command, the only integrated Command of the Indian Armed forces.

The Flag Officer has attended courses at DSSC, Wellington, HDMC at CDM, Secunderabad and the Royal College of Defence Studies, London. The Admiral was awarded the Nau Sena Medal (NM) in 2018.



**Prof (Dr) Sriparna Pathak**  
Professor,  
OP Jindal Global University



Prof (Dr) Sriparna Pathak is a Professor of China Studies and Associate Dean of Careers at the Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University. She is the founding Director of the Centre for Northeast Asian Studies and also serves as Associate Director at the Jindal India Institute.

Dr Pathak holds a PhD, MPhil, and MA from Jawaharlal Nehru University, and a BA from the University of Delhi. Her research and teaching focus on China's foreign policy and international relations theory, with broader interests in East Asian geopolitics.

Her professional experience spans academia, policy, and think tanks, including roles at Gauhati University, Don Bosco University, the Ministry of External Affairs India (Policy Planning & Research Division), the Observer Research Foundation, and the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research. She is also a regional partner with Doublethink Lab, working on tracking China's influence operations, and has collaborated with the European Union's External Action Service on countering foreign information manipulation.

A recipient of multiple prestigious fellowships, including the MHRD–China Scholarship Council award, Dr Pathak is fluent in English, Hindi, Mandarin, Bengali, and Assamese. She is widely published and frequently cited in leading global media such as The Hindu, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, South China Morning Post, and The Washington Post.



**Dr Shrabana Barua**  
Associate Professor  
OP Jindal Global University



Prof (Dr) Shrabana Barua is an Associate Professor and Director of the Nehringpao Kipgen Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at the Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University. Her research focuses on South and Southeast Asia, with particular expertise in infrastructure and connectivity, geopolitics and geostrategy in India's neighbourhood, Myanmar and Pakistan, and multilateralism in Southeast Asia.

She holds an MPhil and PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, and a BA and MA from Hindu College, University of Delhi.

Dr Barua previously served as a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs and was on the faculty at Hindu College. She has also been associated with leading think tanks including Gateway House and Nepal Institute of International Cooperation and Engagement.

Her research has been widely published, including her ICSSR-awarded doctoral work on infrastructure diplomacy in Myanmar. She is the co-editor of India's Nuclear Titans: Biographical Tales (2023) and has contributed extensively to academic journals, policy papers, and media platforms.



**Dr Chime Youdon**  
Research Fellow, NMF



Dr Chime Youdon is a Research Fellow and Head of the Resilience, Sustainability, and Ocean Resources (RSOR) Cluster at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi. She specialises in climate resilience, sustainable blue economy policy, and maritime infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific, with a focus on addressing systemic risks posed by climate change. Her work advances integrated frameworks that bridge policy, science, and strategy to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities and critical port ecosystems.

She holds a PhD in International Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, with a specialisation in comparative global climate policy, and is an alumna of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS), Honolulu. Dr Youdon is a recipient of several competitive fellowships, including the Vice Admiral KK Nayyar Fellowship (2020–2023) for her book project, *Rising Seas and Coastal Impacts: Metropolitan Resilience in India*; the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) Fellowship (2021–2022), where she developed a seaport resilience framework; and the 2024 Quad Infrastructure Fellowship, supported by the U.S. Department of State, focusing on secure and sustainable port infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific.

Dr Youdon has contributed to global policy processes as an expert member of India's G20 Working Group on the Sustainable Blue Economy and the QUAD Working Group on Resilient Seaport Infrastructure. Her work is widely published in peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes, and strategic policy reports, and continues to inform debates on climate security and ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific.



## Captain Himadri Das

Indian Navy



Captain Himadri Das is a serving naval officer. He graduated from the Naval Academy, Goa and was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 July 1994. During his service, in addition to operational, policy, and training appointments, he has been actively engaged with doctrinal development, including at the strategic and operational levels. He was previously Senior Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation, and editor of the Indian Naval Despatch.

He has authored several articles and three books on issues related to maritime and coastal security. He holds an MPhil degree in Defence and National Security Studies; post graduate degrees in nautical sciences, international relations, and maritime law; and a post graduate diploma in human resource management. His PhD thesis is on maritime security governance in India.



**Mr John J Vachaparambil**  
Associate Fellow, NMF



Mr John J Vachaparambil is an Associate Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi, where he is part of the Public International Maritime Law (PIML) cluster. His research focuses on fisheries governance, particularly Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and the conservation of marine biodiversity. He holds an LL.M in Infrastructure and Business Law, specialising in Sustainable Marine and Offshore Infrastructure Governance, from TERI School of Advanced Studies, and a BA LL.B (Hons) from Christ University, Bangalore.

He has further specialised in ocean governance through a certificate course in Oceans Law and Policy from Gujarat Maritime University and professional training under the EEZ Protection Officers Course conducted by the Royal Navy, UK. He is an alumnus of the Yeosu Academy of the Law of the Sea and a recipient of the 2026 DFAT Fellowship from the Government of Australia.



**Captain (Dr) Ranendra Singh Sawan, IN**  
Senior Fellow, NMF



Captain (Dr) Ranendra Singh Sawan is a serving officer of the Indian Navy with extensive operational and academic experience in maritime security and strategy. A specialist in navigation, aircraft direction, and naval operations, he currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation, where his work focuses on the Indian Ocean, particularly its hard security dimensions.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he was commissioned into the Indian Navy in July 1996. Over his career, he has served in key operational roles both at sea and ashore, including command appointments, a staff tenure at IHQ MoD (Navy), and as Directing Staff at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He has also been a Visiting Navy Fellow at the Sea Power Centre, Australia.

Captain Sawan holds a PhD in Defence and Strategic Studies and has published widely on maritime strategy and nuclear deterrence.



**Prof (Dr) Sreeradha Datta**  
Professor, OP Jindal Global University



Prof (Dr) Sreeradha Datta teaches International Affairs, at OP Jindal Global University presently. She is also a non-resident Senior Fellow with Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore. Earlier she was Senior Fellow and Centre head, Neighbourhood Studies Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi. She has also served as director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata, Government of India, and has held fellowships with Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, Government of India. She holds a Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is also the Director of, Centre for Analytical Research and Engagement, a research centre within Jindal University.

Her research interests include area studies-South Asia and India's extended neighbourhood, Southeast Asia and Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific. She has undertaken thematic studies on regionalism and cross-border issues, bilateral ties, security studies.

She has authored and edited over ten books and has published over 170 articles in journals, edited volumes, newspapers and academic websites. She continues to participate in various bilateral dialogues and is on Journal editorial committees.



**Mr Prasanth Chandran**  
Director, Security Division  
BIMSTEC



Mr Prasanth Chandran is an officer of the Indian Economic Service (IES) from the 2007 batch. He holds a Master's degree in Economics, a Bachelor's in Education, and has qualified the National Eligibility Test (NET). He has had a diverse and accomplished career across various departments.

In his early career, he worked as a Research Assistant in the District Planning Offices of Wayanad and Trivandrum, Kerala, where he was involved in managing the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). He transitioned into academia as an Assistant Professor of Economics at CKGM Government College, Perambra, and later at University College, Trivandrum. In 2008, after joining the IES, he undertook probationary training as Assistant Director in the Department of Economic Affairs, followed by a significant stint as a Research Officer in the Planning Commission from 2009 to 2012, where he contributed to project appraisals.

From 2012 to 2015, Prasanth served as Deputy Director in the Ministry of Shipping, playing a key role in technical operations and tariff regulation at major ports across India. His leadership skills were further honed during his tenure as Regional Passport Officer, Cochin, from 2015 to 2019. Under his direction, the Cochin office was recognized as the best passport office in India for three consecutive years, and it was particularly noted for its exemplary handling of passport applications after the devastating Kerala floods in 2018.

From 2019 to 2024, he worked with the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare as Director, overseeing restructuring of nearly two dozen centrally sponsored schemes into two major schemes viz. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana.

## Dr Sayantan Haldar

Associate Fellow,  
Strategic Studies Programme,  
Observer Research Foundation (ORF)



Dr Sayantan Haldar is an Associate Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), where he is part of the Strategic Studies Programme. His research focuses on maritime studies, with particular emphasis on geopolitics, maritime security, and regionalism in the Indian Ocean and the Arctic.

He holds a PhD in International Relations from South Asian University, New Delhi. Prior to this, he completed his MA and BA (Hons.) in Political Science from Presidency University, Kolkata.

Dr Haldar serves as a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of the Indian Ocean Region (Routledge, London). His academic work has been published in leading journals such as International Affairs and Maritime Affairs. He also contributes regularly to prominent newspapers including Hindustan Times, The Hindu, and The Telegraph, offering analysis on contemporary strategic and maritime issues.



**Ms Muskan Rai**  
Research Associate, NMF



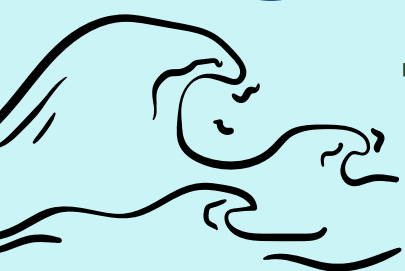
Muskan Rai is a Research Associate at the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, where she specialises in multilateral maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, with a focus on frameworks such as IORA and BIMSTEC. She holds a Master's degree in International Relations, Security and Strategy from the Jindal School of International Affairs and a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Delhi.

Her research work engages with maritime safety, regional security architectures, and India's evolving policy approaches, including its leadership role in regional organisations. She has authored and co-authored policy-oriented articles on issues such as India's upcoming chairmanship of IORA and strengthening institutional linkages in the Bay of Bengal.

Previously, she served as a Research Intern and Junior Research Associate at the Foundation, gaining experience in maritime law, security studies, and policy analysis. Her broader interests lie in foreign policy, maritime strategy, and fostering practical regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.



# SAMUDRAMANTHAN



**The Bay of Bengal Seminar  
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## EVENT PROGRAMME



# PROGRAMME

## “THE BAY OF BENGAL AS A REGION FOR CO-OPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT” (SAMUDRAMANTHAN-2026)

0900-0930 (30 min)	Tea and Registration	
INAUGURAL SESSION		
0930-0935 (05 min)	Introductory Remarks by the EMCEE	Ms Priyasha Dixit Research Associate, NMF
0935-0945 (10 min)	Welcome Address	VAdm Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM Director General, NMF
0945-0955 (10 min)	Conference Overview	Professor Hindol Sengupta Director, Global Order
0955-1015 (20 min)	Commemorative Address	Mr MJ Akbar Former MoS for External Affairs
1015-1020 (05 min)	Memento Presentation and Group Photograph for all Speakers and Panellists	



**PANEL DISCUSSION  
IMAGINING THE BAY OF BENGAL AS A SHARED SPACE**

<b>1020-1025 (05 min)</b>	<b>Remarks by the EMCEE</b>	<b>Ms Priyasha Dixit Research Associate, NMF</b>
<b>1025-1125 (60 min)</b>	<p><b>Host and Discussant: DG, NMF</b></p> <p><b>Guests:</b>  <b>1.Prof Hindol Sengupta, Director, Global Order</b>  <b>2.Rear Admiral Mukul Asthana (Retd)</b>  <b>3.Amb Riva Ganguly Das, Former Secretary East</b></p> <p><b>Format: Opening Remarks: (Host + each Guest) (Total 25 min)</b>  <b>Moderator's Interaction with each Guest: (Total: 45 min)</b></p>	
<b>1125-1130 (05 min)</b>	<b>Sessional Break</b>	

**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 1  
SECURING MARITIME LIFELINES: CONNECTIVITY AND RESILIENCE ACROSS THE BAY OF BENGAL**

<b>1130-1135 (5 min)</b>	<b>Introductory Remarks by the EMCEE</b>	<b>Ms Priyasha Dixit Research Associate, NMF</b>
<b>1135-1140 (5 min)</b>	<b>Moderator's Remarks</b>	<b>Dr Ameya Pratap Singh Managing Director, Yogayatan Group</b>
<b>1140-1155 (15 min)</b>	<b>Analysing the BIMSTEC Master Connectivity Plan</b>	<b>Dr (Ms) Rupa Dutta Former Principal Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), MoCI</b>
<b>1155-1210 (15 min)</b>	<b>Port Infrastructure, Scale, Competitiveness, and Resilience</b>	<b>Dr Sanjeev Ranjan Former Chairman, National Shipping Board, MoPSW</b>
<b>1210-1225 (15 min)</b>	<b>Perspectives on Multi-modal Connectivity from Landlocked Countries</b>	<b>Dr Prabir De, Professor, Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity, RIS</b>
<b>1225-1240 (15 min)</b>	<b>Development of the Galathea Bay: Regional Implications</b>	<b>RAdm Sandeep Singh Sandhu, NM Senior Directing Staff (Navy), NDC</b>
<b>1240-1300 (20 min)</b>	<b>Audience Interaction and Moderator's Summation</b>	<b>Dr Ameya Pratap Singh Managing Director, Yogayatan Group</b>

<b>1300-1400 (60 min)</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
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**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 2  
NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES IN THE BAY OF BENGAL**

<b>1400-1405 (05 min)</b>	<b>Introductory Remarks by the EMCEE</b>	<b>Ms Priyasha Dixit Research Associate, NMF</b>
<b>1405-1410 (05 min)</b>	<b>Moderator's Remarks</b>	<b>Dr Sriparna Pathak Professor, OP Jindal Global University</b>
<b>1410-1425 (15 min)</b>	<b>Co-relating Geography and Regional Stability</b>	<b>Dr Shrabana Barua Associate Professor and Director, Nehginpao Kipgen Centre for Southeast Asian Studies OP Jindal Global University</b>
<b>1425-1440 (15 min)</b>	<b>Climate, Environmental Security and Disaster Preparedness in the Bay</b>	<b>Dr Chime Youdon Research Fellow, NMF</b>
<b>1440-1455 (15 min)</b>	<b>Smuggling and Trafficking: Implications for Regional Security</b>	<b>Captain Himadri Das Indian Navy</b>
<b>1455-1510 (15 min)</b>	<b>IUU Fishing and Resource Conflicts</b>	<b>Mr John J Vachaparambil Associate Fellow, NMF</b>
<b>1510-1530 (20 min)</b>	<b>Audience Interaction and Moderator's Summation</b>	<b>Dr Sriparna Pathak Professor, OP Jindal Global University</b>

<b>1530-1550 (20 min)</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
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**PROFESSIONAL SESSION 3  
COOPERATIVE MECHANISMS IN THE BAY OF BENGAL: CONSTRUCTS AND COORDINATION**

1550-1555 (05 min)	Introductory Remarks by the EMCEE	Ms Priyasha Dixit Research Associate, NMF
1555-1600 (05 min)	Moderator's Remarks	Captain Ranendra Singh Sawan, IN Senior Fellow, NMF
1600-1615 (15 min)	BIMSTEC as a Norm-Setter in the Region	Prof (Dr) Sreeradha Datta, Professor, OP Jindal Global University
1615-1630 (15 min)	Operationalising the BIMSTEC- IORA MoU: Way Forward	Mr Prasanth Chandran Director, Security Division BIMSTEC
1630-1645 (15 min)	Lessons from ASEAN-Led Cooperation for the Wider Bay Region	Dr Sayantan Haldar Associate Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)
1645-1700 (15 min)	Role of Track 1.5 and Track 2 Platforms in the Bay of Bengal	Ms Muskan Rai Research Associate, NMF
1700-1720 (20 min)	Audience Interaction and Moderator's Summation	Captain Ranendra Singh Sawan, IN Senior Fellow, NMF

1720-1730 (10 min)	Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks	Ms Junyali Gusain Research Associate, NMF
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**END OF PROCEEDINGS OF SAMUDRAMANTHAN 2026**

