

Ink Briefs

India's strategic thinking rooted in ancient wisdom, says Amb. (Retd) Abhyankar

Amb. (Retd) Rajendra Abhyankar says, in a booming economy, the standard of living continues to improve, but studying income inequality is crucial for sustained progress. A long-term plan must be designed to ensure widespread prosperity. Who will resist changing a system that grants them the freedom to choose their representatives? **PAGE 02**

A discourse on ideas of Nationhood and Civilizational Imagination in India

"Bureaucrats are not very good at making people change their way of thinking, academics are", said Prof. Gautam R. Desiraju of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, during a discourse on ideas of nationhood and civilizational imagination in India. However, what it means to be a civilization was the pressing question of the hour. India needs scientific and academic institutional power to become an empire, he said. **PAGE 04**

'Taali do haath se bajti hai', that's Indian geopolitics today: Amb (Rtd) Gautam Bambawale

"Taali do haath se bajti hai, so if the other country does not reciprocate those feelings, then there is a problem, differences of opinion, and conflict," said Ambassador (Retired) Gautam Bambawale. The other panelists at the Session "Geopolitics and Conflict" were Dr. C. Raja Mohan (Foreign Policy Analyst), Dr Rudra Chaudhuri (Director, Carnegie), Rear Admiral (Retd) Surdarshan Shrikhande (Naval War College). **PAGE 04**

'When we believe in our heroes, we'll get the world to believe in our heroes'

International Relations Conference 2023 | Minister of External Affairs Dr S. Jaishankar said India should be a continuous source of global initiatives like yoga which has been propagating our branding



MEA Dr. S Jaishankar with Symbiosis International (Deemed University)'s Vice Chancellor Dr Ramakrishnan Ramman; Founder and Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) S. B. Mujumdar, and Pro-Chancellor Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar after unveiling the plaque for Symbiosis Centre for Promoting the Philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Source: SIMC Studio

Good education, cultural activities ultimately lead to national integration: Prof (Dr.) S. B. Mujumdar

PUNE: When foreign and international students come together they develop not only friendship but brotherhood; and so a quality education and good cultural activities would ultimately lead to national integration, Prof (Dr.) S. B. Mujumdar, Founder and Chancellor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University) said. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the International Relations Conference 2023, Prof. Mujumdar recounted the challenges faced by international students, which motivated him to establish Symbiosis.

Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro-Chancellor, SIU expressed her gratitude for the deep engagements Symbiosis has had with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India. This collaboration ensures the participation of esteemed speakers and academicians from India and abroad, enriching the discourse on international relations.

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Abhijay Raj Vaish & Amisha Pathania

PUNE: "When we believe in our heroes, we get the world to believe in our heroes," said External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India Dr. S. Jaishankar as he delivered the keynote address at the 9th International Relations (IR) Conference held at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in Pune on Saturday. He added that the recently concluded G20, under India's presidency, was "a statement of rebalancing" of India's international status.

which has so far been dominated by the West. The use of western terminologies, metaphors and concepts in the global intellectual society is a direct reflection of how the culture has not moved alongside the economic and political shifts in the contemporary world.

Emphasizing the need for a transformed narrative, he illuminated India's unique role in shaping international relations amidst global recalibrations. "India should be a continuous source of initiatives at the global level. Yoga is one such initiative which has been instrumental in propagating our branding," he said.

Speaking on 'India's Strategic Culture: Addressing Global and Regional Challenges', Dr. Jaishankar stressed on the power of narratives

na while discouraging geographical subjugation through a western cultural lens.

The International Relations Conference 2023 at Symbiosis International University echoed the EAM's impassioned plea to integrate India's heroic figures and cultural heritage into the fabric of global diplomacy. Talking about the narratives related to IR, Dr. Jaishankar stressed on the fact that "the world hasn't changed as much as we think it has".

He further stated the role of power, politics, and history on international relations which is apparent in the dominance of the western narratives. He propagated the diplomacy of Lord Hanuman and Lord Krishna-

and stressed the media's crucial role in shaping a society that questions, critiques, and progresses. Illustrating the importance of maintaining a clear identity, he likened media to consumer goods giant HUL, stressing the need to know what is being sold and to whom. Despite the dominance of entertainment

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No Nation has Survived Without a Strong Media, says Girish Kuber at Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture

Vidushi Nautiyal & Yashaswani Chauhan

PUNE: No nation has survived without a strong media in the country, said Mr Girish Kuber, author and Editor of Marathi daily 'Loksatta' in Pune on Monday. Adding social media has actually freed the news from the news editors' control, he urged journalists to adapt to the changing landscape by not just focusing on 5Ws1H of journalism, but also asking 'Why now?' and 'What next?'.

He was speaking at the 7th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, on the topic of 'Contemporary News Media at Crossroads', organised by the Symbiosis International (Deemed University) and Pune International Centre (PIC). A seasoned journalist, Mr Kuber has authored 'The Tatas: How a Family Built a Business and a Nation' and his upcoming 'The Invisible Enemy'.

Touching on the current challenges faced by the media, Mr Kuber shed light on the importance that one dismantles political bureau structures and focuses on larger issues, such as climate change and artificial intelligence. Touching on the current challenges faced by the media, Kuber shed light on the importance that one dismantles political bureau structures and focuses on larger issues, such as climate change and artificial intelligence.



Dileep Padgaonkar

any political ideology and stressed the media's crucial role in shaping a society that questions, critiques, and progresses. Illustrating the importance of maintaining a clear identity, he likened media to consumer goods giant HUL, stressing the need to know what is being sold and to whom. Despite the dominance of entertainment

content, he expressed confidence that the era will pass, citing a faithful audience valuing serious content. On political engagement, Mr Kuber encouraged having informed opinions, dismissing the notion that being opinionated is a sin. He stressed the need to understand diverse perspectives in politics, asserting that there is no ultimate truth. Discussing alternate media, he talked about its role in providing diverse narratives but highlighted the absence of a sustainable revenue model in India.

He also cautioned against free content, stating, "If something is free, you are the product."

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The Girish Kuber Interview, P07



Mr Girish Kuber being felicitated by Prof. (Dr.) S.B Mujumdar, Founder and Chancellor, SIU (SIMC Studio)

Symbiosis's school of thought is inclusivity and the creation of global citizens: SIU Chancellor

Dr. S.B. Mujumdar and Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar welcome the MEA for the inaugural session of the IR Conference 2023, emphasising diversity in strategic discourse

Alakshendra Singh & Ajay Hanje

PUNE: The International Relations Conference held at SIU Lavale campus, was inaugurated by the Honourable Minister of External Affairs Dr. S Jaishankar, in the presence of Dr. S.B Mujumdar, the Chancellor of Symbiosis International University, as he shed light on India's strategic thought and the importance of understanding the global narrative.

Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro-chancellor of SIU began her address saying that she had always felt the need for the discussion of India's strategic planning to move out of centres like Delhi. She mentioned that in a country like India with its diverse population, such an important topic of discourse should have diverse participants. She explained the vision behind the conference and the benefit of having a room full of experts helping shape the future of our nation in the form of students.

The 9th edition of this International conference had trainee officers from the Sushma Swaraj Institute of



Dr. S. Jaishankar (Centre) with Mrs Sanjeevani Mujumdar, Prof. (Dr.) S.B. Mujumdar, Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar and Dr. Ramakrishnan Raman at the IR Conference 2023 at SIU (Deemed University). Source: SIMC Studio

Foreign Service, officers of the MEA and students from the Symbiosis International University. Dr. Vidya signified the importance of the common man to understand India's strategic structure. She talked about

the journey of the conference, how it started from very humble beginnings back in 2013 when it was limited to topics like Africa, West Asia etc. But in 2018 the conference and its participants first discussed shap-

ing a new strategic culture for India.

A jam packed auditorium tuned in as Dr. Mujumdar, Chancellor of the Symbiosis International Deemed University highlighted the tenets of the Symbiosis school of thought pertaining to inclusivity, culture, and the creation of global citizens. He thanked Dr. S Jaishankar for agreeing to deliver the keynote address and kicking off the conference. Dr. Mujumdar pointed out that Symbiosis had first started as a cultural centre. He remarked that he always felt that culture was an important factor in foreign policy and his vision of pushing Indian characteristics and values through education is what persuaded him to build the University. Dr. Mujumdar recalled his days as a professor and mentioned the ill-treatment towards foreign students at that time. He wanted to change the impression of India and how we treated our guests as it spoke to our thinking as a nation. He concluded by emphasising the values of "Eastern wisdom and Western dynamism" moving forward.

When we believe in our heroes, we'll get the world to believe in them....

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He criticized the universalization of the western terms like Pyrrhic victory, Gordian knot, and Trojan Horse, and mistaking 'westernism' for modernism. He further delved into how to "create and propagate international relations with Indian characteristics bolstering India's stance during an era of economic and political re-balancing of the world." The G20 was one such event which reflected this shift of rebalancing stemming from the premium nature of G7.

He further mentioned that the West has "airbrushed history and told it the way it suited them". An approach of convenience was referred to by the Minister while citing the acceptance of 5000-years-old unbroken Chinese history by western intellectuals who would not allow the same privilege to India.

Dr. Jaishankar stressed on the power of narratives which are dominantly British owing to the colonial tradition of thoughts and debates. "The British used the narrative of education and progress to build themselves an empire"

India's Strategic Thinking Rooted in Ancient Wisdom, says Amb. (Retd) Abhyankar Highlights Nation's Rich Heritage

He explains how strategic thinking is a crucial factor in determining the stance of a nation on the international platform

Amrutha Avasarala & Prerana Toshniwal

PUNE: Amb. (Retd.) Rajendra Abhyankar addressed the session on strategic thinking and strategic culture of India and the world. He also detailed the current scenario and requirement to approach the nation's hindrances with a long term stance, paving the way for our nation to rise high. The panelists Amb. (Retd.) P.S. Raghavan, Dr. Kajari Kamal and Dr. Saurabh Mishra along with Amb. (Retd.) Abhyankar led the discussion on 'Evolution of Indian Strategic Thought: Political and Economic Dimensions'. "Why do nations behave the way they do?"

The concept of strategic thinking and culture is a crucial factor determining the stance of a nation on the international platform. Strategic culture is derived from the political culture of a nation striving for peace and security. Amb. (Retd.) Abhyankar referred to the definition provided by Shivshankar Menon, the former foreign secretary of India, that Strategic culture is an identifiable set of basic assumptions about the nature of international and military issues. He said that this would involve both a central paradigm about the role of war and human affairs, the efficacy of force, the nature of the adversary and a

grand strategy or secondary assumptions about the operational policy that flows from these assumptions.

In India's context, he shed light on the nation's strategic culture inherited from its ancient knowledge. He calls it a product of India's history, culture, geopolitics, socio-economic compulsions and considerations. Strategy is a reflection of a nation's understanding of its society and the culture embedded in it.

This linkage of society and its culture to strategic thinking, in the modern times, answers the question of "Why do nations behave the way they do?"

Amb. (Retd.) Abhyankar quoted George Tanham, who wrote that India does not have strategic thinking. He also said that many Indian thinkers also endorse the same view. Adding further he said, "This is far from the truth as we have a tradition of strategic thought that goes far back in history".

The gift of accumulated wisdom: India's history of several thousand years not only shares stories of the past but also produces rich literature by its ancient philosophers. One of the oldest texts on the affairs of state is the Arthashastra. The treatise is roughly 2300 years old. It elaborates the roles and duties of a king, agriculture, mining, law, administration of justice, de-



The panelists of the Session on evolution of Indian Strategic thought. Source: SIMC Studio

tection, crime, various elements of foreign policy and many more. Other historical sources such as Bheesmaparva and Ashoka's edicts provide elaborate information on the nature of kingship and the state. Chandragupta Mourya, Ashoka the great, Marathas, Cholas and Pandya who conquered south east asia, are examples of successful implementation of strategic thinking.

Amb. (Retd.) Abhayankar calls this as "richness of strategic thinking over generations". He calls this a wealth of knowledge that has passed down as "accumulated wisdom". He

added, "with this richness of strategic thinking over generations, time has come to be maximally guided by our accumulated wisdom to ensure that India achieves external and internal goals in the future".

Hunt for long term solutions is need of the hour:

India, one the emerging superpowers, has a great influence and impact on an international level. With an estimated growth of 7.2% in the fiscal year 2023, it is high time to take a long term strategic view of issues needing deep consideration if decisions need to be

based on populism or a longer view.

The farmers' agitation has been a major burning issue since 2020. There are continuous civic disruptions such as rail rokho and major highway blockings, disturbing the economic and civic peace. Amb. [Retd.] Abhyankar says that there must be an understanding established with the farmers and also umbrella issues of agriculture pricing, export policy for specific products such as basmati rice, middle men, minimum support price and the public distribution system must be discussed.

Another concerning short sighted arrangement is the prolific nature of freebies ahead of elections. The distribution of freebies falls under the provisions of subsidies. This casts a cascading effect on taxpayers. And also, supplying freebies or providing reservations for the formerly suppressed sections of the society is a temporary solution whereas India needs a long term vision of elevating the state of its underprivileged citizens.

Inspite of the long standing speculations, this incredible nation has survived grave hurdles, had its own share of ups and downs, failed numerous times but always regained the confidence and strength to stand up again and in the process, it has prospered from a civilization state to a nation state.

India and Foreign Policies: An Integrated Approach to Values and Interests in Global Diplomacy

India's Holistic Fusion of Values and National Interests in Global Relations



Mr. Vijay Gokhale addressed global and regional challenges. Source: SIMC Studio

Bansri Shah & Bhavika Jain

PUNE: Where does the balance lie between values and interests in the context of foreign policy? The session on, 'Ethical and Moral Dimensions in Statecraft', at the International Relations Conference 2023 on India's Strategic Culture: Addressing Global and Regional Challenges, revolved around this question posed by Mr. Vijay Gokhale.

Prof. Amrita Narlikar addressed the question in detail during her presentation on the need to look at international relations with Indian characteristics.

According to her, it is imperative to look at what not to do with ethics and foreign policy to get insights into what could actually work. She put forward the created dichotomy between values and interests and related it to China.

To deal with China, for example, the US and other countries would be at a better position if they found allies with whom their interests aligned. However, this alignment would often ignore other possible flaws (like in terms of animal rights or human rights) because of their national vested interest in their alliance.

"This might not have happened if instead of assuming that interests and values are somehow separate, it was recognised that values and interests are reflexive, they are mutually constitutive with one shaping the other," said Prof. Narlikar.

She cited India's example in its foreign policies stating that India already followed a style of global leadership that was instilled with this particular sentiment. They originate from the Mahabharata and have since become a part of India's strategic culture which believes that if values are protected, interests will also be protected. Sometimes it pays to be good. Prof. Amitabh Mattoo also added on

"If all the books of war and peace were to suddenly disappear from the world and only the Mahabharata remained, it would suffice for answering all possible dilemmas and debates on statecraft."



Prof. Amrita Narlikar delved into ethical considerations of Indian geopolitics during the session. Source: SIMC Studio

to this by talking about the concept of dharma. In the Mahabharata, dharma is following the path of truth without any selfish interest or without any hopes of reaping the fruits of one's actions.

He said, "If all the books of war and peace were to suddenly disappear from the world and only the Mahabharata remained, it would suffice for answering all possible dilemmas and debates on statecraft."

In navigating whose values to follow in foreign policies or who decides the dimensions of these values, Prof. Narlikar yet again pointed to India. Since, Indian value systems account for values that benefit the planet as a whole going beyond humans to a more non-anthropocentric view. She said, "The Indian approach does not only seek intergenerational justice but also interspecies justice."

Prof. Narlikar also talked about the dilemma of what would happen if prioritizing values over interests put countries like India at a disadvantage, especially when some nations, like the European Union, seem to act based on their interests.

She once again turned to the Bhagavad Gita pointing out that values

and interests aren't necessarily in conflict, "the pursuit of values actually reinforces your (The nation's) interests".

Col. (Retd.) P. K. Gautam, too, supported the idea that sticking to a set of values, even if they seem to clash with practical interests, might be beneficial in the long run. He argued that pursuing values doesn't have to mean sacrificing interests; in fact, it might strengthen them.

This perspective would challenge the usual ideas in global relations and encourage a more thoughtful approach to making policies.

The cultivation of values would, thus, not be a distraction but a supportive force for national interests. The debate on values and interests needs to be reevaluated and adapted to fit contemporary global political scenarios. India and its inclusive value-based approach has the potential to provide fresh and powerful ideas to the problems of today's world.

The discussions echoed a vital need to transcend the traditional dichotomy between interests and values, emphasizing their interdependence rather than conflict. Ethos offers compelling lessons.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: India's Unique Foreign Policy

Ancient Wisdom Meets Modern Challenges

Drumil Modi & Disha Tandon

PUNE: At the IR conference, Indian experts explored the country's one-of-a-kind foreign policy, mixing age-old values with today's global complexities. The panel discussion kicked off by tackling a common debate: values versus interests in global affairs. The panel argued that prioritising economic gains over values hasn't worked well, and many nations are realising the need to reflect on their international relations.

The idea of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" was introduced in the session, emphasising a perspective rooted in ancient Indian texts, that goes beyond human centric climate activism, advocating for trans-species justice and biodiversity preservation.

"The panel emphasised that this generous perspective, rooted in ancient texts, is vital for tackling to-

day's global challenges, from biodiversity loss to preventing pandemics. The experts stressed the need for combining research and real-world action to resolve challenges

They encouraged a more human-centric approach to development and urged protecting values that resonate with India's long-standing vision. Led by Professor Amrita Narlikar, the discussion explored the diverse ways India has approached strategy. The ancient Mahabharata was highlighted for its insights into making decisions that balance moral considerations in international politics.

In the final segment, the focus turned to strategic autonomy rooted in Dharma – a principle beyond self-interest. The speakers argued that this approach promotes the greater good, humanity, and people. The discussion closed with a call for a deeper understanding of Dharma in shaping policies.

Unveiling India's Strategic Thought through Strategist Chanakya's Arthashastra

Dr. Kamal and Dr. Mishra dissect Indian diplomacy and strategic decisions

Amitha Reji George & Anvesha Dash

PUNE: In the International Relations Conference, Dr. Kajari Kamal and Dr. Saurabh Mishra shed light on the political and economic dimensions, revealing a nuanced understanding deeply rooted in India's ancient wisdom in the context of Arthashastra while also evoking what Chanakya might have to say about modern Indian diplomacy.

Dr. Kajari Kamal, emphasised the profound connection between livelihood and Artha, asserting that the protection and acquisition of the Earth are encapsulated in the ancient science of Arthashastra.

Considered a cornerstone in international relations and political science, Chanakya's Arthashastra serves as "a compilation distilled from earlier texts", guiding rulers to legitimise their authority by ensuring the well-being of their Praja through land augmentation and protection.

Dr. Mishra, in a complementary discourse, explored the concept of "unity in diversity", asserting that "India's diverse nature is already embedded". Culture, far from

being a determinant, shapes strategic behaviour, exerting a constant pressure to adhere to certain values. Drawing parallels to Arthashastra, Dr. Saurabh Mishra highlighted its pervasive influence, with conceptual figures found throughout India. The incorporation of Arthashastra's ideas into Manusmriti underscores its significance.

The rhetoric that emerged from the discourse was the adaptive nature of India's strategic thinking and how it has always been in existence. Dr. Mishra stated that, "India's strategic behaviour evolves with the adoption and invention of new technologies", illustrating the nation's prowess in adapting to contemporary challenges.

When the question of "What is India?" arose, both scholars conveyed that India is a complex amalgamation of diverse cultures, with a unique ability to assimilate external influences while preserving its own rich heritage. This fusion, according to Mishra, results in "the continuous formation of layers, each enhancing the value of the successive one without erasing the preceding strata".



Dr. Saurabh Mishra's views on Unity and Diversity. Source: SIMC Studio

Building on the Past: Experts Unveil India's Strategic Culture and Reflect on Geopolitics and Conflict

Garima Sharma & Eeshna Dashottar

PUNE: The third session was led by Prof. C Raja Mohan along with discussants Dr. Rudra Chaudhuri and Rear Admiral (Retd.) Sudarshan Shrikhande at the International Relations Conference hosted by Symbiosis School of International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Lavale on 25th November 2023. The panel shared their insights on the topic 'Geopolitics and Conflict' in relation to India's Strategic Culture, i.e., the theme of the conference.

Prof. C Raja Mohan, Senior Fellow, Asia Society Policy Institute, New Delhi started by saying, "Not utilize the past but reflect on the past." He spoke about geopolitical consumption, where he specifically mentioned four issues - territoriality, the notion of fear of influence, connectivity and maritime domain. While elaborating on fear of influence, he countered with an ex-

ample of the Russia and Ukraine War, where Russia wants to restore the fear of influence and Ukraine doesn't want to be a part of it. He mentioned that post independence, India has been following the idealistic and ideological approach in order to overcome the challenges in all the four domains mentioned above.

Dr Rudra Chaudhuri, Director of Carnegie India and a senior lecturer at King's College, London, discussed four myths that need to be debunked in order to recover the strategic culture of our country. While elaborating on the myths such as the impossibility of not having a strategic culture, and questions about sovereignty, he also countered the myth about India being shy of using military force by giving examples from the past like the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and 1971 and the 2016 surgical strikes, establishing the idea with a base from the past that India has the potential and



Prof. C. Raja Mohan talked about geopolitical consumption

Source: SIMC Studio

has shown its military power before. He also talked about the necessity of debunking what exists in proper mythology in order to build clarity on the strategic culture of the country.

Rear Admiral (Retd.) Sudarshan Shrikhande, Adjunct Faculty, Naval War College, Goa and Editor-in-chief of Indian Naval Despatch, extensively referred to India's

ancient political scenario, specifically in terms of maritimeness and continentality. He brought varied examples of ancient India to build an understanding of how these concepts of geopolitics have been widely present in the political history of India and how varied Indian dynasties and rulers responded to these issues. He took the examples of the

Chola and the Pandya dynasties extensively, owing to their advanced presence in the maritime trades and navy. He touched upon various historical examples of the presence of trade in the Vedic period, the Cholan embassy and the Pandyan embassy to Rome to further show how maritimeness and continentality existed in the governance, planning and political functionings of our country for ages. Rear Admiral (Retd.) Shrikhande also brought out instances from Mahabharat, Arthashastra and the workings of the Maratha kingdom to explain the modern-day geopolitical issues he was delivering his speech on. An overall view of 'Geopolitics and Conflict' within the context of India's Strategic Culture was offered at the third session of the International Relations Conference. Prof. C Raja Mohan discussed geopolitical consumerism, highlighting India's idealistic past. .

'Taalī Doh Haath Se Bajti Hai': That's Scenario of Geopolitics and Conflict in Contemporary India



Ambassador (Retd.) Gautam Bambawale remarks on India's global engagements. Source: SIMC Studio

Payoshi Bisht & Ishika Kumar

PUNE: Ambassador (Retired) Gautam Bambawale, the former Indian Ambassador for Bhutan, and the People's Republic of China, assumed the role of the Chair for Geopolitics and Conflict. In his thought-provoking opening statement, he remarked, "Taalī doh haath se bajti hai, so if the other country does not reciprocate those feelings, then there is a problem, differences of opinion, and conflict." This perspective set the stage for a nuanced exploration of India's global engagements.

The panel also included Dr. Rudra Chaudhuri, the Director of Carnegie India, and a Senior Lecturer at King's College London. His contributions brought a unique blend of academic rigour and practical insights to the

discussion. Rear Admiral (Retired) Sudarshan Shrikhande, serving as Adjunct Faculty at Naval War College, Goa, and holding the position of Editor-in-chief for Indian Naval Despatch, added a valuable naval perspective to the deliberations.

India's commitment to strategic autonomy formed a key theme in the discussions. It involves prioritising India's interests while fostering strategic connections with a diverse array of nations, even those where Western countries, including Australia, may not share significant strategic alignment.

This commitment aims to ensure maximum freedom of action and autonomy in decision-making, acknowledging the complexity of the contemporary geopolitical landscape.

A focal point of India's strategic considerations is its relationship with China. The discussion went beyond geographical proximity, encompassing China's broader regional ambitions and influence. Acknowledging deep strategic competition underscores the complexity of India's diplomatic and security challenges in navigating this critical relationship. India envisions an international order that accurately reflects the contemporary distribution of power, rejecting adherence to rules it had no role in establishing. This nuanced position reflects India's commitment to fairness and equity in global governance.

In the realm of defence, India has set forth ambitious plans to significantly enhance its capabilities. This includes reducing reliance on imported defence equipment and promoting domestic production, with an emphasis on joint ventures. The objective is to bolster strategic autonomy and increase India's strategic weight in the international arena.

The International Relations Conference at Symbiosis International University provided a platform for thought leaders and experts to delve into critical aspects of India's strategic culture and its implications for global and regional challenges. The discussions encapsulated a comprehensive understanding of India's approach to geopolitics, emphasizing its commitment to autonomy, strategic cooperation, and a balanced international order. As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, India's multifaceted engagement and evolving strategies will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in shaping the future of international relations.

Discourse on Ideas of Nationhood and Civilizational Imagination

Khushi Bhuta & Khushi Maheshwari

PUNE: The Oxford Dictionary defines civilization as "the stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced" but is this stage restricted to the tangibility of geography? Or does it transcend beyond that point to enter into a realm of abstractions? Does only being clustered together make a community part of the same civilization?

The first session of the second day of the International Relations Conference 2023 entailed discourses on this very conundrum. The Chair of the session, Prof. Priyanka Upadhyay staunchly advocated the role of religion and nationalism in international discussions surrounding liberalism. Contradictory to the ideas perpetuated by Western philosophers like Samuel Huntington and Fukuyama, he emphasized on the core of Indian peacebuilding being based in pluralism, diversity, and shastrarth. "For long they had no patience for normative ideas and a term like religion was kept out of the United Nations till year 2000."

Taking further the narrative of the Bharatiya Nationhood, the Chair said that peace and conflict are not perceived as binary but continuous. He described the Mahabharata as not just a legend about war, but also about peace. Building on the arguments presented by Prof. Upadhyay, speakers Mr. Sanjeev Sanyal and Mr. Hindol Sengupta, brought to the forefront the significance of applying 'Bharat Culture' to contemporary geopolitics.

Mr. Sanyal repudiated the recent controversies surrounding the use of the word 'Bharat' while talking about Indian nationhood, by highlighting the use of the word in the

earliest historical accounts across the globe. Illustrating the weaponization of history in geopolitics, Mr. Sengupta drew parallels between the Chinese claim on the Indian Ocean and India's sense of ownership of the Indian Ocean as "India's Ocean."

Taking a pragmatist approach and veering away from the theoretical considerations encompassing the state of Indian geopolitical strategies, Prof. Gautam R. Desiraju delved into the pragmatic applications of these considerations. Pointing to the fact that India is "no longer abjectly poor," he added that economic interests are at the crux of all foreign relations. Indian sensibilities lie in its understanding of its rich, ancient history more than propagating it to the world. He denounced the term 'nation-state' being used to address India and instead, referred to the Indian civilization as an empire in the making. "If nationhood is a kind of manifestation of people looking outwards, civilization is a manifestation of people looking inward." In India's quest to become the said empire, it is paramount to understand the power of the mind. Prof. Desiraju believes that this psychological warfare can help one to fathom the strategic culture of their counterparts and will act as a hard power in the arena of International Relations.

Dr Desiraju believes India needs scientific and academic institutional power, economics can only take a country so far. Addressing Dr. S. Jaisankar directly, he urged for developments in the aforementioned fields. "Bureaucrats are not very good at making people change their way of thinking, academics are." Despite differences, all speakers agreed the key to India's progress is discovering her self-identity.

Exploring India's Civilizational Imagination: Timeless Historical Records and Dynamic Concept of Bharat

Mahiya Patel & Kumar Siddhartha

PUNE: "Why are we even talking about the old things? It is because we are still a living civilization," said Prof. Desiraju at the session on 'Ideas on Nationhood and Civilizational Imagination', at the International Relations Conference 2023 hosted by Symbiosis International University. The question laid the groundwork for the discussion, delving into an exploration into the need and timeless relevance of historical records of India to allow foreign countries to understand the 'Indian' way of things.

The chair of the session, Dr. Priyanka Upadhyay, highlighted a key difference between the way governments of the West, and the society as a whole, believe in a world of binaries - good and bad, right and

wrong, black and white. The Indian school of thought, however, presents ideas and concepts which aren't binary but a continuum of thought. He cited the example of a commonly used Sanskrit proverb 'Vade Vade Jayate Tatva' which means that one may only approach the truth with a set of diverse opinions and thoughts.

Dr. Sanjeev Sanyal, the principal speaker of the day, expounded on the concept of a civilisational state vis-a-vis India. Dr. Sanyal said, "The word Bharat first appeared in the Rig Veda. It was the name of a tribe which had settled along the now mythical Saraswati River." Paleontological evidence suggests the existence of a river which began from the Shivalik and finished its journey at the Rann of Kutch. The river is believed to have dried up around circa 2000 BC turning



Mr. Sanjeev Sanyal explored the history of 'Bharat'

Source: SIMC Studio

its estuary, the Rann of Kutch into the largest salt desert in the world. Dr. Sanyal stated that the path of the Saraswati is the most important geographic area of Indian civilization.

Dr. Sanyal narrated a tale from the Bharatas tribe, "The king or

Chakravartin of the tribe once in a large battle defeated a confederacy of ten tribes and instead of imposing his religion and culture on the conquered people, he called all the wise men of the day and had them compile all their knowledge. This

would turn out to be what we know today as the Vedas." Dr. Sanyal summarized this incident in the context of the Indian sentiment with the statement, "All the old gods have a place around the sacrificial fire." Dr. Sanyal presented the audience with another story which brings together this land and her people, "Daksha, a very powerful king of his time once organized a yagna inviting all the gods apart from Shiva, by doing this he violated the basic Vedic compact that all the gods get a seat at the table. Therefore, his daughter and the wife of Shiva immolated herself in the yagna fire, which brought on great rage and wrath of the destroyer god. Vishnu, the preserver in his wisdom, deposited twenty-two pieces of Sati's mortal remains across the land of the Bharatvarsh which sacredly reunited it.

Diplomacy or War: What is the Future?

Reflections on Diplomacy and Governance

Meghna Barik & Pranav Mathur

PUNE: War is not the answer, diplomacy is," emphasized Amb. (Retd.) Talmiz Ahmad, who chaired the 'International Relations Conference 2023 - Diplomatic Practices In Foreign Policy; The Indian Way'. He reiterated this stance by pointing to the periods of consecutive war and struggle as a compelling illustration of what defines Bharat. Ambassador Ahmad revisited the Indian history of colonial struggle elucidating how people from all segments of the country united together with an aim to achieve independence, oiling the wheel towards one consensus. "This is what makes us Bharat", states Amb Ahmad.

The discussion delved into the diverse nature of history which is not stipulated to the books or literature and widens itself to the value of lived experiences further framing the rich heritage and future of the country. None of these experiences are rigid, the debate on this perpetuates, which is extremely crucial in deciding the foreign policy of a nation. AMB. Ahmad also highlighted how 'Strategic Autonomy' is an intrinsic idiosyncrasy to the value of our foreign policy.

Medha Bisht, Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations, at South Asian University articulated the importance of 'Dharma' in Indian politics and theories. She continued by expressing that colonialism allowed the flow of liberal ideas along with manipulation of vanishing one's root ideals, theories, and philosophies, and making Indians believe in humanism rather than indigenous literature. "We taught the English the game of chess, but we were outwitted by the English in the game of chess".

The session also drew attention towards the necessity to come up with solutions instead of being dependent on international organiza-



Dr. Medha Bisht reiterated the importance of Dharma.

Source: SIMC Studio

tions for aid. The country needs to keep the world away which will in turn help in preserving the sovereignty of the nation-state. It is crucial for India to avoid the demerits of globalization which brings about the drawback of foreign entities intervening in domestic affairs. Additionally, the speakers deliberated on the significance of a nation sticking to its ideals; otherwise, the emergence of new ideas leads one to forget their own identity.

Prof. (Dr.) Pankaj Jha asserted the importance of having compulsory academic courses related to India's civilization and the strategies needed. According to him, Kautilya could be comprehended as a role model for larger strategic thoughts just as yoga is for global health.

"Diplomats will need to defend intervention. Diplomats will need to defend our choices", remarked Dr. Rahul Sagar while discussing the role of the international relations department. He involved the audience in the concept of how inadequate governance in other regions has a negative impact on India. He ended with the thought, "throughout the 19th century, Indian intellectuals asked themselves, why did Marathas not love their brothers, and why all English men never betrayed their men".

Experts Discuss India's Diplomatic Practices and Strategic Culture in International Relations

Fayez Hoda & Mannat Saini

PUNE: At the International Relations Conference 2023 on India's Strategic Culture, experts delved into the diplomatic practices and strategic culture of India, shedding light on the nation's approach to international relations. The session, titled "The Diplomatic Practices in Foreign Policy: The Indian Way," featured notable speakers which witnessed a lively discussion on the realm of contemporary and historical diplomatic practices, centering on the pivotal subject of India's strategic culture.

Dr. Rahul Sagar focused on traditional texts in his address. He emphasized two crucial observations: first, that international politics revolves around interests, and second, that effective leadership is essential in safeguarding those interests. However, he acknowledged the challenges faced by traditional texts from 1919 to 1989, as the emergence of liberalism and orientalism posed a threat.

Dr Sagar cited an article by Gandhi published in The Jewish Advocate, where Gandhi advocated pacifism when addressing Hitler's threats. However, Dr Sagar argued that the traditional approach does not solely endorse pacifism, as indicated by Balgangadhar Tilak's book Gita Rahasya, which emphasizes the necessity of action for progress.

Amb. (Retd.) Talmiz Ahmad, who began the session, emphasized that the decisions made by delegates during conflicts are influenced by the strategic culture of their respective countries. Ahmad further

"The Ajmer Shareef is not an Islamic shrine... It is an Indian shrine,"

highlighted that a country's strategic culture stems from its heritage and history, perpetuated through generations and becoming a lasting legacy for its people. However, Ahmad expressed his opposition to solely relying on manuscripts to define the lived experiences of people.

He argued that India's secular nature is defined by its people and their diverse experiences. To support his statement, he talked about Ajmer Shareef, "The Ajmer Shareef is not an Islamic shrine... It is an Indian shrine," emphasizing the diversity within the Indian cultural experience Ahmad stated how despite India's strategic autonomy since 1947, the country's foreign policy has been criticized for being ad hoc, short-term, and reactive.

He attributed this to the constant debates surrounding India's diverse nature, referring to the nation as a "rainbow nation" due to its rich diversity and culture. According to him, India cannot be pigeonholed into a single mold due to its vast array of individual traditions and cultural heritage.

Throughout the session, the panelists reiterated the crucial importance of India's success in international diplomacy, emphasizing the significance of strategic thinking and a well-defined strategy. The discussion shed light on the complexities of India's diplomatic practices and the ongoing efforts to shape a more robust and effective foreign policy approach.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Dr Rahul Sagar is Global Network Associate Professor of Political Science at NYU Abu Dhabi. He is deeply

interested in the politics and society of India, especially Indian political thought Sagar's work has been published in a number of edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals including the Journal of Political Philosophy, The Journal of Politics, Ethics and International Affairs, and Polity.



Dr Medha Bisht is an Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations, at South Asian

University. She is a Ph.D. from the Diplomatic Studies Division at Jawaharlal Nehru University. She writes for national dailies like Indian Express and the Pioneer, and alternative social media like The Wire and Live Encounters. Her book Kautilya's Arthashastra: Philosophy of Strategy was published by Routledge: London in 2020.



Prof. (Dr.) Pankaj K Jha is Professor with JSIA, O P Jindal Global University, and Director of Centre for Security

Studies(CSS). He is Executive Director of a research oriented think tank known as CESCUBE. He teaches national, international security, and defence strategy to the postgraduate students at O P Jindal University. Prof.. Pankaj Jha also teaches online courses with MA in International Relation. sand Strategy with COURSERA.

Envisioning an Indian School of International Relations: Scholars Discuss Distinctiveness, Global Impact & Challenges



Prof. Varun Sahni talks about the importance of building theories.
Source: SIMC Studio

Shreya Varanasi & Ramit Mehrotra

PUNE: In the realm of global diplomacy, the call for an Indian school of International Relations has been louder than ever. India has come a long way from its foundational principles rooted in non-alignment to the contemporary pursuit of a multipolar world order. Scholars discussed the idea of an Indian School of IR and whether it is finally time the idea gets visualized. Prof. Amitav Acharya, Dr Atul Mishra, and Prof. Siddharth Mallavarapu spoke about Indian IR theory in a session chaired by Prof. Varun Sahni at the International Relations Conference 2023 on India's Strategic Culture: Addressing Global & Regional Challenges held at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) on 26th November 2023.

Prof. Amitav Acharya asserted that an Indian school of International Relations must be distinct from the existing schools of thought, which is a third important aspect of imagining a school of thought. Another important aspect is to have a critical mass of followers, and the theories must have longevity. He further added, for a school to last, the thought must travel, they must cross international borders, and must create a lasting

impact on the minds of the people.

On the operations of a school of thought, Amitav says that for a "set of ideas to form a school, people must focus on the thought and must be on consensus with the thought." A school only runs successfully when the school collectively agrees with the thought. On understanding international relations at a global scale, Amitav suggests redefining and broadening the discipline of IR and recognizing the history, ideas, and practices of other countries. Lastly, he said, to institutionalize the thought of International Relations, the post-colonial arguments shouldn't be rejected.

Taking the conversation forward, discussant Dr Atul Mishra raised a few propositions which challenged Prof. Acharya's points. Dr Mishra spoke about introducing the possibility that since humanity is one, ideas of where they are created from are applicable to all. He further spoke about the claim that international relations contain some Western hegemony. Dr Mishra also shared his thoughts on the word 'global' in the global IR spoken about by Prof. Amitav. He said, "I can understand American, European, and Western history as well as Indian, Chinese and Islamic, African, South Afri-

can, Japanese or Bangladeshi history. But I struggle to understand the sense of global history..." In the later part of the session, Prof. Siddharth Mallavarapu gave 10 propositions on the topic of discussion. One of them was material power and standing appear to determine perceptivity to ideas on the global stage.

He said, "...We must not be surprised that the discipline characterized by strong Anglo-American accents that has neglected ideas from other parts of the world particularly Asia, Africa, South American..." The chair of the session

Prof. Varun Sahni ended the thoughtful session by sharing his thoughts on the discussion. He talked about the idea of a new school of international relations, the uncertainty surrounding it, and what one should take away from the discussion. He also talked about sovereign territoriality and how one should go about with it. "Maybe there is an Indian way of doing that, maybe there isn't," he concluded. The school of thought that India adopts for international relations was detailed and commented upon. India's stance on the global platform is a result of its strategies and thoughts on IR.

Indian School of IR Takes Center Stage in Shaping Future Diplomats

Arish Mujawar & Pratik Das

PUNE: The eleventh edition of the International Relations Conference (IRC) hosted by the Symbiosis School for International Studies concluded on 26th November, 2023, with a keynote address by Amitav Acharya, Distinguished Professor of International Relations at American University, Washington, DC. Acharya, who is also the first non-Western scholar to be elected the President of the International Studies Association², spoke on the topic of "Indian School of IR – An Idea Whose Time Has Come?".

Acharya argued that India has a rich and diverse tradition of strategic thinking and statecraft that can inform and enrich the study and practice of international relations. He said that India's strategic culture is not monolithic or static, but rather pluralistic and dynamic, reflecting the diversity and complexity of India's history, geography, society, and culture.

He also pointed out that India's strategic culture is not isolated or inward-looking, but rather open and interactive, influenced by and influencing the wider world.

He challenged the dominant Western-centric approach to international relations, which he said is based on a narrow and parochial understanding of the world and its problems. He said that the Western approach is not only inadequate and irrelevant



MEET THE SPEAKER

Professor Amitav Acharya is the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance and Distinguished Professor at the School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC. He is currently Honorary Professor at Rhodes University, South Africa, and Guest Professor at Nankai University, China. He has received three ISA Distinguished Scholar Awards: in 2015 for his "contribution to non-Western IR theory and inclusion" in international studies, in 2018 for his "influence, intellectual works and mentorship" in the field of international organization; and in 2023 for his "extraordinary impact" in globalizing the study of International Relations and "mentorship of emerging scholars". He is also a recipient of American University's highest honor: Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award (2020).

for addressing the global challenges of the 21st century, but also hegemonic and exclusionary, marginalizing the voices and perspectives of the non-Western world. He called for a more pluralistic and inclusive approach to international relations, which he termed as "Global IR", that recognizes and respects the diversity and multiplicity of the world's civilizations, cultures, and actors.

In the session he also identified some of the key themes and issues that an Indian School of IR would address, such as the role of ethics and morality in statecraft, the balance between realism and idealism in foreign policy, and multi-alignment in a changing world order, the idea of civilizational dialogue and cooperation, the notion of human security and development, and the vision of a multipolar and multilateral world.

He also highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities that an Indian School of IR would face, such as the need for empirical and analytical rigor, the need for dialogue and engagement with other schools and traditions of IR, and the need for relevance and impact on policy and practice.

Finally, he concluded his speech by urging the young scholars and students of IR in India to take up the challenge and opportunity of developing and promoting an Indian School of IR. He sheds light on issues and themes that would be answered with India's planned and strategized international relations. Acharya said that an Indian School of IR is not only "an idea whose time has come, but also an idea whose time is now".

*You are in a country where
no one is a foreigner...*

*My dear international brothers and sisters,
Welcome to India, welcome to Pune, welcome to Symbiosis*

*You are in a country where no one is a foreigner,
We are all human beings,
We are all human races, all ages are living together*

*You are in a country where,
teacher, mother and father are Gods
And do you know where you the guest, too, is regarded as the God
You are in a country where women are worshipped and
not merely loved.*

*You are in a country where,
nothing shines like the shyness of a woman,
You are in a country where,
the poverty and the nobility live together,
Where poor great are more remembered than kings and mothers,
Where sacred stones are costlier and greater than the costliest diamonds*

*You are in a country where,
right is a might, humility is not a weakness and
where knowledge is power.
You are in a country where,
sins have noble past but sinners have noble future.
And to this country, my international brothers and sisters, may your
stay become happier and your mind nobler and broader.*

*Prof. (Dr).S.B Mujumdar
Chancellor & Founder
Symbiosis International (Deemed) University*

IRC 2023 concludes with aim to carve out a distinct place for Indian perspectives in the global discourse on strategic thought

Shruti Sneha & Shristy Kamal

PUNE: The halls of Symbiosis resonated with intellectual discourse as the University concluded the two day International Relations Conference (IRC) 2023 which offered fresh insights into India's strategic thought and its influence on policy responses to global and regional challenges. The vote of thanks was delivered by Prof. Shivali Lavale, Director of Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) where she thanked Dr. S. Jaishankar, teammates and students.

The conference organizers expressed a significant ambition to contribute to the nature of International Relations studies in India. With the shift towards India's growing centrality in international relations, the conference aimed to carve out a distinct place for Indian perspectives in the global discourse on strategic thought. **DAY ONE: India's Strategic Evolution-Context, Challenges, and Ideals**

During the first session of the conference that delved into the intricacies of India's strategic thought and its influence on policy responses to global and regional challenges, experts and

scholars engaged in a nuanced discussion through a non-western lens.

The conference highlighted the lesser discussed yet intriguing book by Nirad C. Chaudhuri, 'The Continent of Circe: An Essay on the Peoples of India' (1965), which provides an in-depth examination of Indian thought. Kanti Bajpai's perspective on the dominance of Jawaharlal Nehru's worldview in India's strategic culture was explored, with an acknowledgement of the evolving landscape where neo-liberalism and realism now contend for influence.

The discussions underscored the evolving academic landscape in India, challenging the transplantation of Western international relations theories of realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism onto the canvas of India's contemporary strategic thought. With a focus on the evolution of ideas related to nationhood, the role of ethics in statecraft, and the influence of economic decision-making, the conference aimed to unravel key values, principles, negotiation strategies, and lines of argument that have guided Indian leaders and thinkers through ancient times to the present.



The International Relations Conference concluded successfully at SIU, Lavale Campus. Source: SIMC Studio

The conference provided a platform for cross-cultural dialogue, creating an environment where participants could exchange ideas, challenge perspectives, and build bridges across borders. As the curtains close on this intellectually enriching event, the legacy of the International Conference at Symbiosis International Deemed University continues to inspire a global community of learners. **DAY TWO: India's Global Diplomacy-Identity and Challenges**

On the second day of the conference, experts and scholars highlighted the importance of a unique Indi-

an perspective in global diplomacy, suggesting the need for an Indian School of International Relations. They focused on India's journey from non-alignment to a multipolar world, emphasizing the significance of shedding dependency theories and making a global impact. Challenging the idea of the Western hegemony, they advocated for a more open and inclusive "Global IR," leveraging India's diverse history, culture, and statecraft. Despite differences, speakers agreed on the importance of India's unique identity for progress. They strongly

emphasized diplomacy over war, citing India's unity during the colonial struggle as defining Bharat. The session stressed the need for India to find its solutions, preserve sovereignty, and showcased the role of diplomats in defending choices.

Wrap Up!

The conference delved into the historical evolution of Indian notions of the State and statecraft, examining key values, principles, negotiation strategies, and lines of argument advanced by Indian leaders and thinkers since ancient times.



Mr Girish Kuber at the 7th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture at Symbiosis's Vishwa Bhawan at SB Road, Pune. Source: SIMC Studio

'We should be raising questions'

Vidushi Nautiyal & Yashaswani Chauhan

Having been introduced to English journalism by Dr. Padgaonkar, Mr Girish Kuber has been working as a journalist since 1985. Besides his work as the Editor of the Marathi daily Lok-satta of The Indian Express Group, he has published various books in both English and Marathi, on politics, business and history. Here is an excerpt from an interview with him:

In a landscape where clarity is scarce, how do you anticipate aspiring journalists to navigate the realm of modern journalism?

"No matter the era or technical advancement the basic quest for raising questions and seeking answers remains the same. And we should be raising questions." Girish Kuber's advice is to opt for reputable news-groups like the Express group and Lok-satta that adhere to the fundamental principles of journalism and have a craving for information and nuanced expression. He cautioned against flamboyant, loud shows that attract attention without addressing core issues. If a media house falls short, budding journalists are encouraged to switch, question, and seek essential information.

With the advent of citizen journalism, there is an increase in misinformation. Do you think it takes away credibility and accountability?

"I don't undermine citizen journalism. I don't look at it in a negative way." Kuber believes that the rise of citizen journalism does not necessarily diminish credibility; instead, it opens avenues for addressing diverse issues. The expert acknowledged the limitations of traditional outlets citing the example of vast areas like Mumbai and highlighting the positive aspect of citizen journalism in bringing attention to remote issues and engaging traditional media.

No Nation has Survived without a Strong Media, says Girish Kuber

Contd. from Page 01

As Girish Kuber concluded his address with a poetic touch quoting Dushyant Kumar, "Kaun kehta hai aasmaan mein surakh ho nahi sakta, ek patthar toh tabiyat se uchhaalo yaaron," the audience was left with a profound reflection on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the field of journalism. His insights offered a concise exploration of the evolving media landscape, where the delicate balance between business interests, ethical considerations, and audience engagement continues to shape the industry.

Commencing his journalistic career in 1985, Girish Kuber's expertise extends beyond national borders. Having collaborated with esteemed publications such as The Guardian, he has left an indelible mark on the global stage by covering significant international events, including the G8 summit.

As he continues to shape narratives and delve into the intricate fabric of Indian society, Kuber remains headstrong in the field of journalism, contributing to the rich tapestry of media and literature alike. In a testament to his prolific career in journalism and literary contributions, Girish Kuber, the esteemed editor of the Marathi daily, Lok-satta, has emerged as a leading figure in the media landscape. Renowned for his insightful perspectives, Kuber is not only the author of the acclaimed work.

7th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture Offers Insights on Media's Path Ahead in the Challenging Times

Sukhmani Kooner & Trisha Ghosh

PUNE: 7th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, held annually in honour of the late Dr. Dileep Padgaonkar, former editor of The Times of India, was held on Monday, 27th November, at Vishwabhawan Auditorium, Symbiosis SB Road Campus, with Mr Girish Kuber, editor of Lok-satta as the keynote speaker for this year. The session was held by Pune International Centre and Symbiosis International (Deemed University) and was attended by dignitaries as well as faculty members and students from various institutes of SIU, including Prof. (Dr) S.B. Mujumdar, Founder and Chancellor, SIU.

Apart from Mr Kuber, other speakers included Pune International Centre President and Scientist, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, Pro-Chancellor of SIU, Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, and Dr. Latika Padgaonkar. At the start of the event, Dr. Dileep Padgaonkar was eulogised by a few of the speakers in their respective addresses and lauded as erudite, liberal and fair-minded. His interests have been said to be current affairs, the arts and even food. In his address to the audience, Dr. Mujumdar elaborated on how PIC began and the core idea behind it. Dr. Ruchi Kher Jaggi, Director of SIMC introduced Mr Kuber.

The session proceeded with Kuber's delivery of his lecture, which was titled 'Contemporary News Media at Crossroads'. Kuber spoke about his views on the future of Indian media and media

as a whole, particularly in regard to what lies ahead for journalism with the advent of social media and artificial intelligence and the direction in which media must go by addressing crucial socio-political, economic and environmental issues, including climate change, that will affect society in years to come.

The address was followed by a Q&A session moderated by Dr. Ruchi Kher Jaggi, in which the audience was permitted to ask questions regarding the lecture discussion. Kuber answered questions about how to balance quality journalism, good content creation and one's future visions for society with the aim of profitability in business. He also elaborated on his views about the idea of being apolitical, opining that it is crucial to have an opinion in regard to politics in order to bring about some kind of change for the better. In regard to the life and work of Dr. Dileep Padgaonkar and other writers and journalists, Kuber ended his keynote address by saying, "We owe whatever freedom we enjoy to their memories."

The memorial lecture ended by a vote of thanks given by Abhay Vaidya, Director of PIC, who once again venerated Dr. Padgaonkar, stating that he was a person who "celebrated life". These Lectures are conducted in memory of the extinguished journalist, Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar. The aim and purpose of conducting these sessions is to create awareness and spread knowledge to the young minds.

A Glimpse of IR Conference 2023 at SIU

Photos: SIMC Studio

