

# South Asia

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## The Myanmar Coup and Resistance: Views from South Asia

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# A Message from the Director

**PROFESSOR C RAJA MOHAN**

Greetings from the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS)!

The year began with some semblance of normalcy as my colleagues and I returned to office. However, the subsequent rise in COVID-19 infections in Singapore led to tightened restrictions and we are now back home and working remotely. However, with a decline in cases and ramp up of vaccinations, we hope to return to office soon. Meanwhile, our researchers have remained unfazed during these trying times, continuing their efforts to track important developments across the subcontinent.

This is an important year for Bangladesh as it celebrates 50 years of independence. When it achieved liberation in 1971, the country had widespread poverty and socio-political instability. However, with a remarkable transformation, it is due to graduate to the list of middle-income countries by 2026. This issue of the newsletter explores Bangladesh's success over the last five decades while also outlining the challenges that lie ahead.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the greater focus of governments on technology and digital media, especially social media, is unsurprising. In February 2021, India announced new social media rules to manage social media platforms. We examine the debate of cybersecurity and cybersafety versus freedom of speech and an open internet in India.

In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the American troops and the resurgence of the Taliban are bound

to have profound consequences for peace and security in South Asia. For nearly four decades and more, the conflict in Afghanistan has relentlessly altered the relationship between religion and politics as well as the geopolitical equations between the major powers and the region.

Moving beyond South Asia, we also focused on India's eastern neighbour Myanmar. Our scholars wrote on the coup d'état which took place on 1 February 2021 when members of the National League of Democracy were deposed by the military. In this issue's feature story, we explore the undeniable geopolitical consequences that the coup will have for the South Asian countries.

The consolidation of the Quadrilateral Security Initiative (Quad) is set to cause considerable geopolitical shifts in Southeast Asia. We contend that the Quad should enter into a dialogue with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to understand its concerns and find ways to address its overdependence on the Chinese economy.

In the first half of 2021, we continued our engagements with organisations in the region such as the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the Centre for Digital Societies, Indonesia, to name a few. We organised webinars on timely issues such as the emergence of the Quad, India's 2021 Union Budget, Nepal's contribution to the United Nations' peacekeeping missions and Arabian geopolitics, among others.

The highlight of the first half of the year was our annual flagship event – the International Conference on South Asia 2021 – organised in partnership with KAS. The conference, 'Five Fault Lines: Reflections on South Asian Frontiers', analysed and reflected the origins of the frontiers in South Asia that were drawn during the colonial period, as well as their evolution and contemporary relevance. This included two public events – a panel discussion and a book discussion – and five closed-door roundtables on the five identified fault lines in the subcontinent.

Our podcast, South Asia Chat, has now crossed 40,000 downloads and is also gaining traction on Spotify. Apart from this, we have reviewed seven new books in the last six months as part of 'The Bookshelf' segment. Here, we examine publications relevant to the study of contemporary South Asia.

In a first for the institute, we launched the ISAS Non-Resident Fellows scheme. We are pleased to have a number of internationally-known and illustrious individuals as our fellows. We look forward to their contributions to ISAS' research, publications and events.

ISAS will continue in its endeavour to analyse the evolving geopolitical story in South Asia. To learn more about the work we do, you can follow our social media pages on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We also live stream our public events on the ISAS Facebook page.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue!

# The Myanmar Coup and Resistance: Views from South Asia

JASNEA SARMA



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

On the night of 1 February 2021, I struggled to connect on an unusually broken video chat with my long-time friend, an anthropologist calling in from Myanmar's Kachin state capital, Myitkyina. Every minute, the connection blacked out, disrupting her updates on the shocking events of the military's coup that morning. Little did she know that three months on, she would be called on to become profoundly entangled with Myanmar's post-coup politics, appointed as one of the deputy ministers for one of the country's most important ministries in the National Unity Government (NUG).

The NUG is now Myanmar's parallel government in exile, competing for legitimacy in the international

realm and contesting the state administrative council of the military junta government that had previously forcefully ousted the legitimately elected National League for Democracy (NLD) government. I have since posed these questions to her, others in the new NUG government, members of civil society and ethnic groups, labour rights groups, friends, and interlocutors who have been part of the country-wide civil disobedience movement in various capacities: What do they wish for regional neighbours, big and small nations in South and East Asia, like to do after the coup? Particularly, how do they see South Asia's long term and post-coup approach to Myanmar?

Answers have varied depending on who speaks from where. Some have sought direct and strong interventions from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, states like India and the United Nations ([UN] through protocols like the R2P), while others have been more reticent and critical of external interventions. Some have called for targeted sanctions, others have argued, veritably that old sanctions enabled rather than inhibited the military to rule with impunity and made it more reliant on arms, drugs and the sale of Myanmar's precious resources to China. Mindful of Myanmar's image, some have called for a full and final need to acknowledge the Rohingya genocide and to reintegrate them into the country, and, finally, there are those that have been more hesitant, calling for a step-by-step approach to inclusion, starting with estranged ethnic minority groups.

Beyond these vibrant discussions, however, a unified sentiment has by and large been persistently discernible, which is the need to tackle the military once and for all and send it back to the barracks. This, in essence, would necessitate a stop to aiding the military in any way, cutting its finances (through targeted sanctions, embargos and checking on the military's business links when investing in Myanmar), curbing weapons sale, recognising their long record of impunity and human rights abuses, recognising how they rule with a near total monopoly over economic transactions through crony capitalism, and supporting the legitimately elected parliamentarians who managed to escape the arrests in Naypyidaw on 1 February 2021.

So how has South Asia, Myanmar's immediate neighbour to the east, responded to this unfolding crisis in neighbouring Myanmar?

If one looked specifically at India-Myanmar relations, India's statements so far have been to diplomatically call for a complete cessation of violence and for

democratic norms to be upheld. India and Myanmar have a shared colonial history, with the former often seen within Myanmar as an example of democracy. India has historically been supportive of the democracy movement in 1988, but that shifted as Myanmar aligned with India's security concerns about the eastern border as well as economic interests in Southeast Asia. From 2010 to the present, India has been Myanmar's fourth-largest supplier of military equipment and weapons amounting to approximately US\$484 million (S\$640 million), which included a submarine donated in 2020. India's economic interests in Myanmar are also harnessed through direct and indirect links with the military's economic reaches. This has guaranteed it some stability in balancing China and managing the Northeast region.

More specifically, Myanmar's military has cooperated with India when confronting insurgent groups in the Northeast. The northeastern borders are often used by the region's armed insurgent groups in coordinated attacks, kidnappings and extortions or as safe havens for cross-border rebel exchanges. Meanwhile, ethnic and indigenous citizens in Northeast India have often complained that such top-down securitisations and militarisation at the borderlands is ahistorical, racialised and geographically deterministic, when historically, these communities (the Naga, the Zo, etc..) were divided by artificial borders inherited by the post-colonial state, thereby fracturing their lived realities. That is why the loudest voices against the military actions in Myanmar have emerged not from human rights activist groups in India or university campuses in the capital cities of India, but from border-states like Mizoram and Nagaland, which share religious kinship, and historical affinities with Myanmar.

China looms large in India's geopolitical fears. There is a backlash against Chinese interference and investments

as partners of the Tatmadaw, exacerbated in the post-coup months. India fears that condemning the Tatmadaw publicly would result in pushing Myanmar closer to China in the future, thus alienating New Delhi's interest. However, if the NUG and the current government in exile prevail, a distinct probability given the Burmese public's support, India's fears in balancing China may prove short-sighted.

In the rest of South Asia, the leaders of Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and the Maldives have similarly issued carefully worded statements without using strong language to condemn the coup. Colombo did not issue any statement. This lack of strong language may stem from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal having pursued similar strategies by forging closer links with the Tatmadaw to protect their economic and strategic interests.

The Burmese military-state should be understood not only in the context of this coup, but also in their perpetual inclination to absolutist and quasi-absolutist control as well as inclination for violence, aggrandisement and crony capitalism since the 1960s. The military had ruled the state with a near-total monopoly over resources, territory and legal instruments, including Myanmar's 2008 constitution (which retained many anti-democratic features and guarantees of military dominance and these legal forms of oppression are in full force). Even after the NLD's accession in 2015, the military continued to fight many ethnic armed groups in the borders and committed atrocities against the Rohingyas in Rakhine state that left thousands of people dead, stateless, and stranded in Bangladesh. Hence, the Burmese public see South Asia's standard statements as insufficient.

Election fraud, which was the military's official reason for the coup has been delegitimised by independent election monitoring bodies. Over the past three months,

the military regime's violence has been laid bare for the world to witness beyond a reasonable doubt. Media reporting and a vibrant Burmese internet society (despite internet cuts) and citizen journalism have documented a grim toll. The past few months have left at least 800 protestors dead, 4,000 detained without proper recourse to trial. Activists, protestors and elected representatives have been arrested and tortured; many dismissed from public jobs for taking part in protests. Besides, there has been a mass exodus of desperate youngsters into the ethnic borderlands in Kachin and Karen state to train with the ethnic armed organisations as a last resort. The coup has left deep mental and emotional strains on the majority of the country. The UN has issued statement after statement condemning the military's action, calling it a 'crime against humanity', while also imploring the International Court of Justice to bring the military to trial.

With such unprecedented mobilisation (even bigger than the 1988 revolution), it is very unlikely that Myanmar's political future will have the same space for military preponderance. South Asia's policy responses are best advised to take these changes into account.

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# The Clash of Institutions: ASEAN and the Quad

YOGESH JOSHI



Photo courtesy of Flickr/The White House (Photo by Adam Schultz)

An recent editorial in *The Jakarta Post* described the first-ever summit meeting between the leaders of India, Japan, Australia and the United States (US), also known as the Quadrilateral Security Initiative or the Quad, as an “adolescent mindset” of ganging up against China. The rebuke sat uncomfortably with the Quad’s commitment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-centrality and the policy decision to produce and distribute one billion COVID-19 vaccines in the region. It also attests to ASEAN’s growing discomfort with the emergence of the Quad as a prominent security institution in the region. Most importantly, the Quad’s

consolidation endangers not only ASEAN’s relevance but also forces the Southeast Asian countries to choose between the region’s extant hegemon and its rising superpower. The clash between ASEAN and the Quad cannot be reduced to institutional shadowboxing. However, it is part and parcel of the power transition currently overwhelming the Indo-Pacific region.

With the end of the Cold War, ASEAN emerged as the fulcrum around which the Indo-Pacific’s economic, political and diplomatic interactions took shape. Its advent as the node of Indo-Pacific’s regional integration, however, depended upon three

factors: the peaceful rise of China as the region’s economic torchbearer; continued American commitment to the region’s security and stability; and a shared Sino-American understanding on the avoidance of any direct conflict between the two major powers in the region.

However, in the last decade, all these assumptions have become problematic. For one, China’s economic rise has fuelled its military and territorial assertiveness, most evident in its unilateral imposition of its maritime claims in the South China Sea. America’s relative decline and its growing domestic polarisation, on the other hand,



have raised questions over its commitment to the region's security and stability. However, what is most disturbing for ASEAN is the ongoing transition of power in the region and the threat of hegemonic wars between a rising China claiming primacy and a declining hegemon bent at preserving the status quo. China's rise has also stoked apprehensions in the minds of the region's other major powers such as India and Japan which are now actively collaborating with the US to arrest China's territorial assertiveness and diplomatic coercion. The emergence of the Quad as a new security institution in the region has grave consequences for ASEAN's otherwise central role in the region's geopolitics. Though both Japan and India constantly reaffirm ASEAN's central role in shaping the region's future, the latter's divided loyalties between China and the US, its allies and partners have also made them question its commitment to the rule of law as well as its ability and sincerity in addressing the issues stoked by China's aggressive intent and actions.

The Quad presents two major challenges to ASEAN. First, ASEAN's institutional strengths notwithstanding, it emerged as a preeminent security institution only because all major regional powers supported it. In fact, ASEAN played a pivotal role in incubating the Quad; it not only brought together the four Quad countries by assimilating them in many ASEAN forums but also provided them an institutional setting where they could share their anxieties and fears regarding the rise of China. Both the 2007 Quad meeting and its resuscitation in 2017 happened on the sidelines of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meetings. However, ASEAN's failure to tackle China's rise, particularly its meek surrender of the South China Sea dispute, signalled its helplessness in maintaining the Indo-Pacific balance of power. The rest of the regional powers have slowly lost their confidence in ASEAN's desire or ability to counter

China's assertiveness. Second, if the ASEAN members feel that the Quad is ratcheting tensions between China and the US as well as promoting a military competition which may force them to choose sides, the Quad countries are also apprehensive of ASEAN's bandwagoning with China. The Quad fears that Southeast Asia will ultimately accept China's hegemony if the latter grew too strong. Therefore, containing China at this stage is more helpful in arresting ASEAN's tilt towards Beijing than it would be a decade later.

These mutual misapprehensions are fundamentally responsible for the growing divergence between ASEAN and the Quad. Insofar, the Quad represents the most formidable military and economic powers in the Indo-Pacific, which will increasingly compete with ASEAN for institutional space in the region. Its strength will ultimately rest on China's assertiveness, ASEAN's timidity and the willingness of its members to pool their resources and policies together.

However, if the Quad has to accommodate ASEAN in its China strategy, it needs to start focussing on geoeconomics; geopolitical encirclement of China will remain incomplete without its economic containment. Since 2007, when the Quad countries first came together for joint naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal, the Quad's agenda has often been driven and judged by the intensity and tempo of its military cooperation. However, such over-emphasis on security relationships was both insufficient and counter-productive.

First, irrespective of their apprehensions over China's military rise or territorial disputes in the bilateral relationship, all four Quad countries remained deeply enmeshed in China's economy as it was the biggest trading partner for all of them. Such economic interdependence not only fuelled China's rise but also provided

Beijing with instruments of economic coercion. Creating a military balance of power in the region without addressing their economic dependency over China is simply unattainable.

Second, geoeconomics may also allow them to offer an alternative to the ASEAN countries, which are otherwise overly dependent upon China for their economic sustenance. It will help the Quad address the scepticism expressed by ASEAN and other countries which view its security-driven agenda as particularly destabilising to their precarious balance of interests vis-à-vis China.

The Quad should enter into a dialogue with the ASEAN states to understand their anxieties and find ways to address their overdependence on the Chinese economy. Contrary to the current global trend favouring economic mercantilism, the Quad countries will have to openly embrace the logic of economic interdependence among themselves and assimilate ASEAN into an alternative economic model, not centred around China.

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# Bangladesh at 50: Successes and Challenges

**IFTEKHAR AHMED CHOWDHURY**

Bangladesh's five decades of history have been remarkable. Born of a hard-fought liberation war inspired by the clarion call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, it achieved its liberation in December 1971, with significant Indian support. At its nascence, it was incredibly poor. Then United States (US) Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had called it a "bottomless basket case". That description at the time, though unkind, did not seem totally unwarranted. The country had inherited a war-battered economy. Its infrastructure was shattered and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

rate was one of the lowest in the world. Socio-political instability was rife. Poverty was pervasive. Floods and famine exacerbated these conditions. The sustainability of its nationhood, indeed its very survival, was called in question. The attention of the world was fixed on it as a prime candidate for global succour and sustenance.

The 50 years of journey that followed was a tale of human endeavour. The nation faced many bumps along the route and experienced vicissitudes of fortune. Eventually, Bangladesh was able to turn the corner. Once the transformation began, the

process appeared inexorable. Today, as Bangladesh stands poised to be counted among the fastest growing of emerging economies, it merits, and does indeed receive, global attention – but in a way very different from the past; this time round, as a prime candidate for a study of a possible development model of transition from penury to progress.

Early socialist values – a heritage of the nation's history – gave way to the opening up of the economy earlier than the rest of South Asia. Prudent management of the external resources, generously



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



provided by donors and sagacious allocation of resources, both foreign and domestic, induced rapid developmental change. There was a steady shift from agriculture with raw jute as primary export to manufacturing industries of readymade garments, pharmaceuticals and now to digital products. This was induced and expedited by the shrinkage of land space to accommodate urbanisation. Traditional migration from the northeast of the region, which led to a leading role of Bangladeshi migrants in Great Britain's restaurant industry, encouraged a later generation migration, albeit as workers, to other parts of the world, particularly the Middle East. Huge amounts of remittances from abroad aided poverty alleviation. The Bengali middle-class ethos of the newer version of the Calcutta *bhadralok* (gentlefolk) unleashed a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit in the private sector, supported by policy packages crafted by public authorities. The absence of a feudal class, resulting from early land acquisition acts accorded political power to the middle classes which helped create a supportive business milieu. The prevalence and influence of a vibrant civil society flowing from Bengal's traditional intellectual resources that found efflorescence with political independence aided social transformation with its focus on health, education and gender issues.

The combination of these factors was reflected on the societal fabric. Statistics and numbers seemed to bear out the positive impact. Aid dependence was reduced from six per cent in the 1980s to less than two per cent now. For decades, the GDP continued to grow at six to eight per cent annually, and despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, growth is predicted at 8.2 per cent in the next financial year. Life expectancy increased to 72 years, higher than 68 years in India and 66 years in Pakistan. In terms of other social indices for development,

such as gender equity, women's development, mortality rate, access to sanitary latrines and immunisation, the performance was better than its neighbours.

Bangladesh is due to graduate from the United Nations' (UN) list of Least Developed Countries to that of middle-income countries by 2026. For the nation, it is both a boon and a bane. Though, this improvement in its image and credit ratings will allow it to borrow more cheaply on the world market, it will also cause it to lose the preferential treatment it enjoyed in the global, particularly Europe, that gave its export numbers, mainly of garments, such a bump. Henceforth, its foreign policy is expected to be geared towards negotiating continued international support measures for the retention and expansion of market access, while obtaining non-reciprocal and asymmetrical benefits in trade arrangements.

This thrust on economic diplomacy complements the safeguarding of national sovereignty, including the manoeuvrability to make decisions independently of foreign influence. The nature of its elite helps its links with the West, including the US and Europe. Geographically, the country is largely "India-locked". India's support during the liberation notwithstanding, all governments in Bangladesh have sought to live in concord with, but distinct from the larger and more powerful neighbour, as well as to relate to India in a way so as not to constrain its relations with China, whose investments in Bangladesh's megaprojects in infrastructure are massive. Navigating circumspectly between China and India is a major challenge for Bangladeshi diplomacy. Like countries in comparable milieu of power, Bangladesh sees its security tied to the global order. Hence, it consistently supports norm-setting multilateral institutions like the World Trade Organization and the UN. The country wishes to enhance global stakes in its existence, which is a major explanation for it being

a major personnel provider in UN peace-keeping operations.

Domestic stability requires equilibrium between the two components of its nationhood, 'Bengaliness' and 'Muslimness'. The two major mainstream political parties, the ruling Awami League of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and the opposing Bangladesh Nationalist Party of Begum Khaleda Zia, are broadly seen as espousing the former and the latter values respectively, though not entirely. Relations between the parties and leaders have been fraught. There are parties that are religion-oriented, which though often vocal are without large electoral support in a community whose predilections, at least in politics are largely syncretic and secular. There are other governance challenges, such as corruption, on which the government is, of late, cracking down.

All in all, Bangladesh seems like a kite rising against the wind. This is perhaps why it has earned from the World Bank the cognomen of the *Bangladesh Paradox*.

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# Afghanistan: The Rocky Road to Peace

SHAKTI SINHA

Afghanistan looks no closer to peace any time soon, even though the United States (US) signed a peace agreement with the Taliban in February 2020. Unusual to most analysts, China has taken on a high profile role in facilitating the intra-Afghan dialogue, initially by mediating between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Counter-intuitively, this initiative has nothing to do with China's fears of a fallout in Xinjiang due to an impending Taliban government in Afghanistan or its interest in copper and other minerals found there. It has, in fact, refused to move on the Mes Aynak copper project even though the prices of copper have risen in recent months and feels that the actual threat posed by Uighur *ihadis* to China is minimal. Instead, its interest lies in strengthening Pakistan's strategic position in the region.

The US, on one hand, says that it has achieved its mission since the Al-Qaeda no longer poses a threat but, on the other hand, would like a military base in the neighbourhood to intervene if the situation turns adverse. Future historians can debate endlessly whether the US simply lost interest or that an Islamic *ihad* in Afghanistan was successful a second time in defeating a superpower and forcing the withdrawal of its troops. The total costs of the US intervention and all development assistance received by Afghanistan tops US\$1 trillion (S\$1.3 trillion) but this has not been enough to ensure the survival of a constitutional set-up based on universal franchise, human rights, gender equity, protection

of minorities and the rule of law. Further, the Afghan society faces increased insecurity, rampant corruption and extortion – a situation best described as the domination of a culture of impunity. Worse, successive presidential elections have lost credibility to an extent where the system's legitimacy is open to question. Officially, President Ashraf Ghani won the last elections polling less than one million valid votes, in a country of 30 million. The system's credibility was always in doubt, as it could not ensure minimum security for its citizens and the overall state of affairs only worsened with time.

US President Joe Biden, while announcing total withdrawal of troops by 11 September 2021, suggested a United Nations-convened meeting in Turkey between the two sides, with neighbouring countries, including India to be held in late-April 2021. Neither the host nor the Taliban showed much interest and the meeting was put off. The Taliban have stepped up their attacks on the Afghan national security forces and in areas controlled by the government – seemingly not inclined to give up their armed option. Responding to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's "direction" that Ghani make way for a transitional government with Taliban participation, the latter first offered to step down and hold immediate elections. He subsequently modified his position and agreed to a transition arrangement that would culminate in elections but has found no takers.

The reality is that it is the Pakistan army which holds the key to any settlement in Afghanistan. While Pakistan has taken credit for bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, it simultaneously denies that it wants to see the Islamic Emirate in power. Recently, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa met Ghani, along with General Sir Nicholas Carter, Chief of Defense Staff of the United Kingdom. News from Kabul is that Ghani was asked to let the Pakistan army mentor the Afghan army, making it in-charge of all training, thus keeping India completely out. In return, Afghanistan would see both political movement and peace. The British presence was probably to assure the Afghans that the proposal enjoyed significant international support.

However, there has been much bad blood between the two neighbours with Pakistan stating that it would have nothing to do with the Afghan National Security Advisor (NSA) Hamdullah Mohib. This gave China the opportunity to step in, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi first speaking to his Afghan counterpart and then to the Afghan NSA. Subsequently, he convened a tripartite meeting of foreign ministers, offering among other things, to extend the China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan and billion dollar investments. China, which has excellent relations with the Taliban, has offered to host an intra-Afghan dialogue. The Afghan government continues to see China as a potential economic game-



Photo courtesy of Sgt Steven Lopez via Wikimedia Commons

changer even though the latter has been a niggardly provider of assistance. But, they also rightly view China as one party that has leverage over the Pakistan army.

China and Pakistan's common objective is to reduce the potential of Afghanistan exercising strategic autonomy or agency if a credible regime, even one headed by the Taliban, could establish control over the country after the US withdrawal. Such a regime would, likely in its self-interest, try and establish good relations with India, both for economic development and political purposes. This has happened in the past, when the Mujahidin government that replaced Mohammad Najibullah in 1992 reached out to India even though the latter was on the 'wrong' side throughout the anti-Soviet *jihad*. This is despite the fact that India's ability and willingness to actually come out with any meaningful action in support of Afghan sovereignty would be extremely limited. A second, and not inconsequential, worry is that with an Emirate in control of

Afghanistan, the *Tehrik-e-Taliban* Pakistan and assorted *jihadi* groups, many nurtured by the Pakistani army, would up their ante internally and pose a threat to large parts of Pakistan. Hence, a weak Afghan government dependant on Pakistan for its survival represents Pakistan's best option, and China would do what it takes to make this happen.

Even as the US is sending out strong signals that it would like a base in the region from where Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could operate drones and validate intelligence inputs received from local assets, there has been a backlash from within Pakistan with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi ruling it out. The Taliban has also attacked such a move, saying that it would violate the Doha Accord. Pakistan is, in fact, sending out mixed signals. The CIA Director, William Burns, flew to Pakistan and met Bajwa, who has also been talking on the phone to US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin. Also, Pakistan's NSA Moeed Yusuf met his US counterpart, Jake Sullivan, and

suggested that the two sides should shift their bilateral relationship to geoeconomics. Qureshi, on his part, seems to be speaking on behalf of the hardliners in Pakistan, who would not like the country to move away from geostrategy. He was a visible part of the effort that scuppered Bajwa's and Prime Minister Imran Khan's attempt to open limited trade with India.

It is impossible to predict how the situation will develop in Afghanistan, but clearly, the neighbourhood cannot take its eyes off the ball. It is unlikely, however, that the violence will abate soon. The trouble for those who think that planned outcomes can be achieved through violence as an instrument of state policy is that it can be started but later it tends to get out of control, reaching the unlikelyest of places.

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# When Social Media, Personal Freedom and Cybersecurity Collide: India's New Digital Media Rules

**ANURADHA RAO**

On 25 February 2021, India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. In media and expert analyses, these rules have more popularly been referred to as "India's new social media rules", with a key objective of being able to reign in (misuse of) social media platforms.

## **Indian Government versus Big Tech**

The focus on social media is not surprising, given its extensive reach in India, particularly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like its counterparts around the world, the Indian government has been locked in ongoing battles with 'Big Tech', which refers to dominant technology companies such as Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft and Netflix. This is combined with a more insidious desire of the Indian government to control media narratives for greater political influence as well as to push for self-reliance and home-grown technology, as part of the government's *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (Self-reliant India) movement.

Against this backdrop, the sweeping guidelines (brought in without adequate public consultation and not as a new law) can be seen as an extension of the government's efforts to reign in social media and

have correctly been criticised for a potentially chilling effect on free speech as well as an open internet.

## **Fear for Freedom**

While objections to the rules from this standpoint have been extensively covered, here are few key areas of concern:

- The role of digital intermediaries (entities that store or transmit data on behalf of other persons, and include internet or telecom service providers, online marketplaces and social media platforms) vis-à-vis content shared or published on their platforms: there are fears that the stringent new obligations may erode the 'safe harbour' protections they currently enjoy.
- The identification of the 'first originator' of information on a platform affects encrypted messaging, thereby severely impinging on user freedoms and privacy.
- The definition and validity of 'unlawful information' that can be blocked by an order of the Court or the government is also problematic, as it could infringe on freedom of speech and expression. This echoes objections to Singapore's anti-fake news law – the Protection from Online Falsehoods and

Manipulation Act – which critics say could give the government overarching powers to decide the truthfulness of information.

While the new rules have the potential to undermine some of the basic internet rights that users have come to expect such as security and privacy with end-to-end encryption, there are some positive aspects too.

## **The Cybersecurity Imperative**

There are undoubtedly some good intentions behind these updated rules, which is an attempt to address some of the most challenging issues confronting governments in cyberspace. Further, when seen against the thrust on cybersecurity and cybersafety, there are some additional points to consider.

For instance, the greater clarity on roles and responsibilities of digital intermediaries is a positive step. For too long, these entities have accumulated vast and frightening amounts of power, and have not been quick or proactive enough to reign in unscrupulous activities and behaviours on their platforms. This has had, and continues to have, disastrous consequences for individuals and societies.

Another welcome development is the emphasis on individual protection in relation to harassment and sexual abuse. The appointment and role

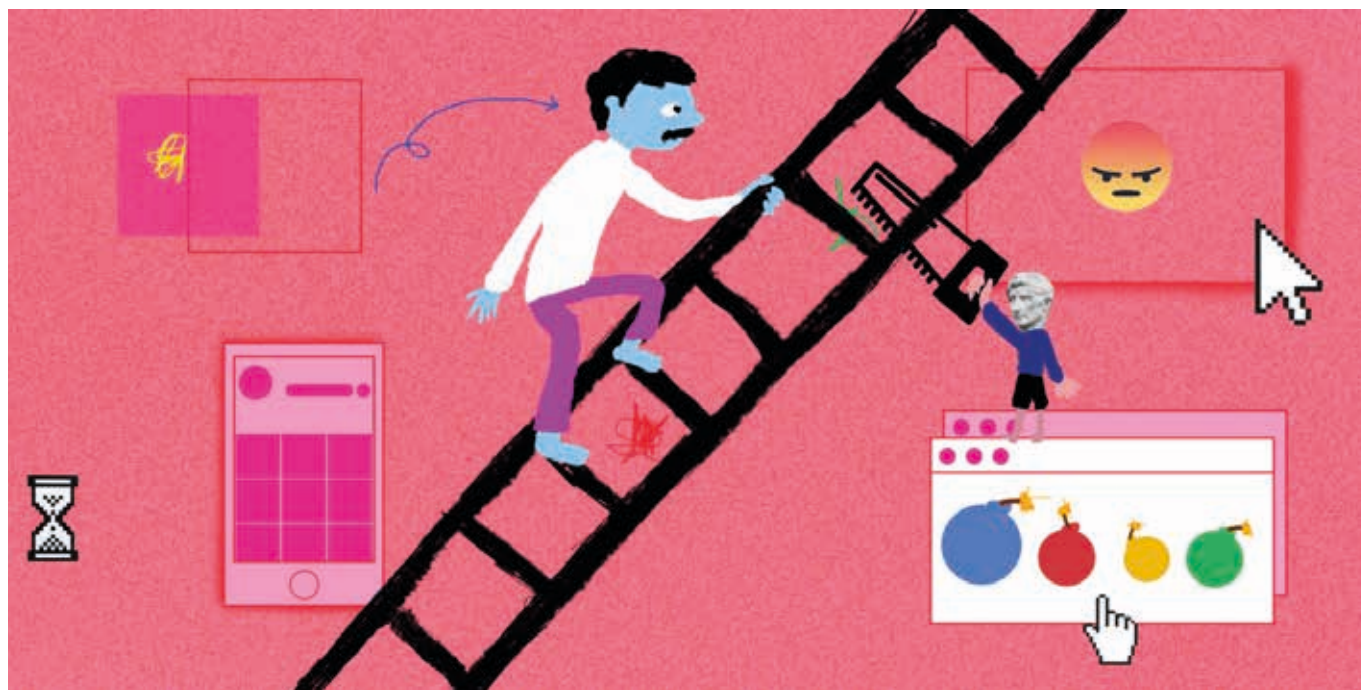


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

of grievance redressal officers to attend to complaints in a timely manner, especially in relation to acts of image-based sexual abuse (including acts commonly known as revenge pornography), would come as a relief for hapless victims. Particularly for women and minorities (sexual, religious or others), who experience first-hand that existing inequalities and hierarchies are translated onto cyberspace, extra protection mechanisms could not come too soon.

Then there is emphasis on keeping children safer online through requirements for digital media publishers to classify content according to age-appropriate categories; the implementation of age verification mechanism for access to adult content; and monitoring measures, such as parental controls. Given the extent to which children are vulnerable in cyberspace, such additional safeguards will force digital intermediaries to take child online safety more seriously.

Finally, the directive to make content accessible for disabled persons is a step towards making internet access more equitable. Bridging this digital

divide will prove critical for people with disabilities to survive and thrive in the post COVID-19 next normal.

### Security versus Freedom versus Politics

There are certainly several paradoxes at play here. On the one hand, the new rules have the potential to curtail user privacy, security and freedom of speech while on the other, they have the potential to improve cybersecurity and cybersafety mechanisms that have not received adequate attention thus far.

However, there is another matter that adds further complexity to this issue – the lack of a dedicated cybersecurity law for the country. India has one of the highest incidences of cybercrime and cybersecurity breaches in the world, with some reports suggesting that it was the second-highest cyber-attacked country in the Asia Pacific in 2020. Yet, India's legal regime continues to adopt a scattered approach, with a combination of laws that are not designed to address complex cybersecurity issues. The National Cyber Security Strategy, which is expected this year, has been under consideration

for some time, and while significant, will fall short of being a full-fledged cybersecurity law.

### Conclusion

While placing greater responsibilities on tech platforms, ostensibly for the safety and security of their Indian users, it is imperative that the Indian government speedily implements a comprehensive national cybersecurity law and uniform cybersecurity framework for the country. In the absence of such a law, the new information technology rules highlight the cybersecurity imperative but also potentially give greater power to the Indian state over social media companies and further erosion of civil liberties. Such fears can be dispelled through the introduction of deliberative processes as well as measures to hold the government accountable for its actions in cyberspace and in the management of digital intermediaries. An enlightened approach is the need of the hour.

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# ISAS Appoints Honorary Fellows

ISAS extends a warm welcome to five distinguished individuals as its Honorary Fellows:



**Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury**

Senior Group Advisor  
Meinhardt (Singapore) Pte Ltd



**Professor Riaz Ul Hassan**

Professor Emeritus of Sociology  
Flinders University, College of Humanities,  
Arts and Social Sciences  
South Australia



**Dr Duvvuri Subbarao**

Former Governor  
Reserve Bank of India



**HE Mr Asoka Milinda Moragoda**

High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India;  
and Founder, Pathfinder Foundation



**Professor Sukh Deo Muni**

Professor Emeritus  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, School of  
International Studies; and  
Member Executive Council  
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi, India

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The ISAS Honorary Fellowship is aimed at ensuring that ISAS is well placed to develop research on and linkages with South Asia and its adjacent regions. The fellowship hopes to create a community of distinguished persons who have previously held research appointments at ISAS or have had/have an affiliation with our institute.

These eminent persons have also held senior appointments in the academia, government, civil society, media and/or business community.

The appointment is for a three-year term from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023.



# Non-Resident Senior Fellows and Non-Resident Fellows at ISAS

As part of a new effort to strengthen our work and widen our reach, ISAS initiated the ISAS Non-Resident Senior Fellowship and Non-Resident Fellowship. The aim of this fellowship is to bring together a vibrant community of South Asian scholars, analysts, journalists and practitioners from around the world.

ISAS extends a warm welcome to the following fellows:

## Non-Resident Senior Fellows



**Professor Katharine Adeney**

Director, University of Nottingham, Asia Research Institute



**Dr Sreeradha Datta**

Centre Head, Neighbourhood Studies; and Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, India



**Professor Sanjay Kathuria**

Senior Visiting Fellow, Centre for Policy Research; Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University; and Visiting Faculty, Ashoka University, India



**Dr Li Li**

Deputy Director and Senior Research Professor Tsinghua University, Institute for International Relations, Beijing, China



**Dr Nalin Mehta**

Dean, School of Modern Media, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies; and Advisor, Global University Systems, India



**Professor Rahul Mukherji**

Professor and Head, Department of Political Science; and Executive Director, Heidelberg University, South Asia Institute, Germany



**Dr Venkatraman Anantha Nageswaran**

Member (Part time), Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, Government of India; and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Economics, Krea University, India



**Dr Ananth Padmanabhan**

Dean, Academic Affairs, Sai University, Chennai, India



**Mr Nitin Pai**

Director, Takshashila Institution Bangalore, India



**Dr Nishchal N Pandey**

Director, Centre for South Asian Studies; and Convener, Consortium of South Asian Think-Tanks Kathmandu, Nepal



**Dr Dinusha Panditaratne**

Advisor, Verité Research  
Colombo, Sri Lanka



**Mr Sujeev Shakya**

Chair, Nepal Economic Forum



**Mr Shakti Sinha**

Honorary Director, University of Delhi, Delhi  
School of Public Policy and Governance;  
and Honorary Director, The Maharaja  
Sayajirao University of Baroda, Atal Bihari  
Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and  
International Studies, India



**Dr Louise Tillin**

Reader in Politics and Director,  
King's India Institute  
King's College London



**Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja**

Senior Research Associate, Overseas  
Development Institute, London;  
and Member, Monetary Policy Consultative  
Committee, Central Bank of Sri Lanka



**Dr Narayan Lakshman**

Associate Editor, *The Hindu*  
Chennai, India

## Non-Resident Fellows

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**Dr Aasim Sajjad Akhtar**

Associate Professor  
National Institute of Pakistan Studies  
Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad  
Pakistan



**Ms Darshana Baruah**

Visiting Fellow, Sasakawa Peace  
Foundation, Japan; and  
Non-Resident Scholar, Carnegie  
Endowment for International Peace



**Dr Alexander E Davis**

Lecturer in International Relations  
University of Western Australia



**Dr Jivanta Schottli**

Assistant Professor, Dublin City University;  
and Director, Ireland India Institute,  
Dublin, Ireland



**Dr Garima Mohan**

Fellow, German Marshall Fund of the United States



**Dr Avinash Paliwal**

Senior Lecturer, International Relations, and Deputy Director, South Asia Institute, SOAS University of London



**Dr Manjeet Pardesi**

Senior Lecturer in International Relations Asia Research Fellow, Centre for Strategic Studies Victoria University of Wellington



**Dr Anuradha Rao**

Founder, CyberCognizanz, Singapore

The Institute looks forward to their contributions in promoting the understanding of the South Asian region, and in communicating knowledge and insights about it to policymakers, the business community, academia and civil society, in Singapore and beyond.

## ISAS Internship Programme 2021

ISAS offers research internships to students who are keen on furthering their academic and research interest in South Asia. This fulfills ISAS' educational role of nurturing students to develop greater awareness and understanding of the region. The internship also serves as a testing ground for potential research analyst appointments at the Institute.

We are pleased to present the first batch of ISAS interns for 2021. They are:



**Ms Venus Lim Chien Jin**

National University of Singapore  
Second Year – Bachelor of Arts  
Internship Duration: 10 May – 30 July 2021



**Ms Raashida Elahi Binte Mohamed Raffi**

National University of Singapore  
Third Year – Bachelor of Arts  
Internship Duration: 10 May – 30 July 2021



**Ms Stacy Fernandes**

National University of Singapore  
Second Year – Bachelor of Arts  
Internship Duration: 10 May – 30 July 2021



**Mr Sidarth Ramesh Ganpati**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Third Year – Bachelor of Arts  
Internship Duration: 21 June – 13 August 2021

During their internship, these students will participate in ISAS' seminars and events, where they will interact with local and overseas-based participants. They will also collate data and provide research assistance to their supervisors at ISAS, as well as work on joint papers with the ISAS researchers.



# ISAS Recent Events

13  
JAN

## EAI-ISAS Roundtable (Webinar)

### New Himalayan Dynamics: Emerging Geostrategic Dimensions of Sino-Indian Relationship

ISAS partnered with the East Asian Institute (EAI) at the National University of Singapore to organise the roundtable on 'New Himalayan Dynamics: Emerging Geostrategic Dimensions of Sino-Indian Relationship' on 13 January 2021. The panellists included Dr Ryan Clarke, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, EAI; Dr Li Li, Senior Research Professor and Deputy Director, Institute for International Relations, Tsinghua University; Dr Li Nan, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, EAI; and Dr Manjeet Pardesi, Senior Lecturer, Political Science and International Relations Programme; and Asia Research Fellow, Centre for Strategic Studies at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

The panellists discussed how trade between the two countries, water resources and technological advancements complicate the relationship as well as how the dynamics of interdependence may not necessitate peace. They also analysed the asymmetry of perception between the two countries — whether each viewed the other as a rival or partner. Ambition towards territorial expansion and the importance of the physical Himalayan



space as a geopolitical tool was highlighted; with the argument being made that it would be against India's best interests to enter into conflict with China.

The importance of Tibet as a bone of contention between the two nations also remains a confounder. With both rising powers occupying almost hegemonic roles in the region, conflict between them has widespread implications on the smaller states in the region. However, until the asymmetry of perceptions, material and military power is deconflicted, the relationship between the Himalayan giants remains complicated.

20  
JAN

## ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion (Webinar)

### Institutionalising the Quad: Can it seize the Momentum for the Future?

On 20 January 2021, ISAS, in partnership with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Japan, organised a roundtable on 'Institutionalising the Quad: Can it seize the Momentum for the Future'. The speakers were Dr Kei Koga, Assistant Professor, Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; Dr Lavina Lee, Senior Lecturer, Department of Modern History Politics and International Relations, Macquarie University, Australia; and Dr Jagannath Panda, Research Fellow and Coordinator of the East Asia Centre Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, India. Mr Ippeita Nishida, Senior Research Fellow, SPF, moderated the panel discussion.

During the event, the panellists spoke on the possible future direction of the Quad and offered some policy suggestions. Broadly, all the speakers agreed that India, Australia and Japan will invest resources in the Quad as they see it as a necessary hedge against China's growing assertiveness. However, given the disparity in



each country's resources, capacity and diverging notions of a rules-based order, the Quad will see 'ebb and flow' periods in its development. They also pointed out that the success of the Quad hinges on whether its members can make the grouping inclusive to all nation-states in the Indo-Pacific. To this end, the panellists suggested the Quad developing cooperation on non-security issues and not solely focus on military exercises and finding ways to target Chinese investments.

### 3 FEB ISAS Book Discussion (Webinar) India's First Dictatorship

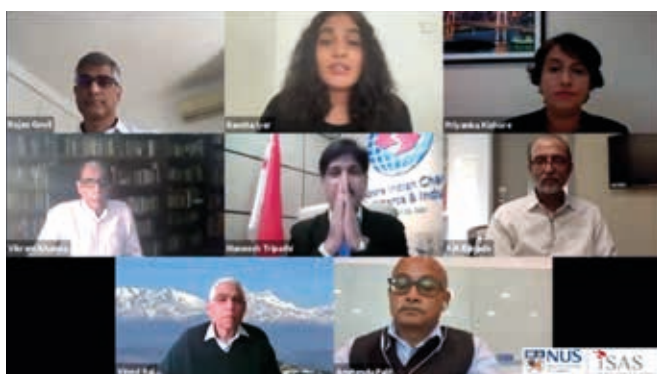


On 3 February 2021, ISAS organised a discussion on the book, *India's First Dictatorship – The Emergency, 1975-77*, with authors Dr Christophe Jaffrelot and Mr Pratinav Anil. Dr Diego Maiorano, Research Fellow, ISAS and Dr Ronojoy Sen Senior Research Fellow (and Research Lead, Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, led and moderated the discussions.

In this book, the authors delve into the Emergency or “constitutional dictatorship” imposed by then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, in the mid-1970s. From June 1975 onwards, democratic India transformed into an authoritarian regime for the next 21 months. The book further exposes how various opposition political parties, trade unions, businessmen, the urban middle class and the media facilitated this authoritarian rule.

The discussion highlighted that there was little resistance in the country as the impact was mainly limited to Delhi. The mass sterilisation programmes and deportation of urban slum-dwellers did not expand widely into other parts of India. While there was a small minority of citizens that fought for democracy during the Emergency, the clout support for the prime minister was overwhelming. Both authors underlined the need to bring into focus the continuities of certain authoritarian traits within Indian democracy now. In conclusion, both Dr Sen and Dr Maiorano remarked that the book offers a meticulous and convincing analysis of the Emergency.

### 10 FEB ISAS-SICCI Roundtable (Webinar) Union Budget 2021: Prospects for the Indian Economy



ISAS and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) jointly organised a roundtable on ‘Union Budget 2021: Prospects for the Indian Economy’ on 10 February 2021. The speakers were Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS; Ms Priyanka Kishore, Head of India and South East Asia, Macro and Investor Services, Oxford Economics; Dr Ajit Ranade, President and Chief Economist, Aditya Birla Group; Mr Maneesh Tripathi, Vice Chairman, SICCI and Group Chief Executive Officer, SEVAK Limited;

Mr Vikram Khanna, Associate Editor, *The Straits Times*; Mr Subhomoy Bhattacharjee, Consulting Editor, *Business Standard*; and Dr Rajan Govil, Senior Economist, IMF - Singapore Regional Training Institute.

The panellists touched on the key challenges for the economy, expectations of investors and the upcoming projects for specific sectors. The various speakers covered issues such as the projections on India's macroeconomic prospects and the budget; reforms in the budget and the disinvestment strategy; industrial policies, infrastructure and investment expectations; investor perspectives; and the socio-political context of the budget.

The speakers agreed that the budget was unusual, not only due to the circumstances brought by the COVID-19 pandemic but also because of significant perspective changes. They concluded that the Budget was an ambitious one aimed at reviving the lagging economy, but the extent of its success in putting India back on the path of consolidation, recovery and sustenance would become evident over the course of the year.

17  
FEB

### ISAS Roundtable (Webinar) The COVID-19 Outbreak: Implications for LDC Graduation



On 17 February 2021, ISAS held a roundtable titled 'The COVID-19 Outbreak: Implications for LDC Graduation'. It brought together a group of experts to discuss the prospects and challenges that the least developed countries (LDC) could face while graduating to the status of a developing country, vis-à-vis the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh will graduate from the LDC category to that of a middle-income country in 2026. In this context, the speakers analysed the economic costs involved in the process – Dhaka could lose about \$9.4 billion in terms of export earnings due to the withdrawal of the Generalized System of Preferences. Additionally, they underscored that these costs, though short term, should be appropriately managed to avoid long-term repercussions.

In Nepal's case, the country has been unable to upgrade from the LDC category due to various socio-political and economic factors, especially after the 2015 earthquake and economic blockade with India. In this light, the speakers highlighted that Nepal's challenge remains in its location as a landlocked country, which hinders its overall development.

26  
FEB

### ISAS Roundtable (Webinar) The Cost of Restraint: Explaining China's Differential Response to China and Pakistan as Nuclear Threats



On 26 February 2021, ISAS hosted a roundtable on 'The Cost of Restraint: Explaining China's Differential Response to China and Pakistan as Nuclear Threats'. Scholars working on India's nuclear programme and its history came together to discuss a paper authored by Dr Yogesh Joshi, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Dr Rohan Mukherjee, Assistant Professor, Yale-NUS College.

The participants were Professor C Raja Mohan, Director, ISAS; Professor Kanti Bajpai, Director, Centre on Asia and Globalisation and Wilmar Professor of Asian Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University

of Singapore; Professor Ian Hall, School of Government and International Relations and Deputy Director, Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Australia; Professor Rajesh Rajagopalan, Centre for International Politics Organisation & Disarmament School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS; Dr Manpreet Sethi, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Air Power Studies, India; and Ambassador Rakesh Sood, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament.

Dr Mukherjee laid out a theoretical framework to analyse why some states choose to proliferate based on threat assessments made by the governments of the state while Dr Joshi presented empirical evidence to support the theoretical framework. Thereafter, the participants shared their views. Among others, they discussed the challenges in developing a grand unified theory and domestic political factors that may have influenced the decision to launch a weaponised nuclear programme.



4  
MAR

## ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion (Webinar) The Quad and ASEAN: The Way Forward

On 4 March 2021, ISAS and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, organised a panel discussion on 'The Quad and ASEAN – The Way Forward'. The panellists included Dr Saya Kiba, Associate Professor, Faculty of Intercultural Communication, Komatsu University, Ishikawa, Japan; Dr Shankari Sundaraman, Professor, Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; and Ms Jane Chan Git Yin, Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

During the discussion, it was emphasised that the central reservation the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had with the Quad was the rise of China. ASEAN's support for the Quad can be viewed as taking sides in the overarching battle for hegemonic power between the United States and China. Another reservation ASEAN had was the plausible diversion of



centrality from it to the Quad, and such reorientation would take away the limited organisational powers it already has.

The panellists also highlighted the importance of exploring the Quad and ASEAN debate, more now than ever, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on major power relations. Also, with the possible institutionalisation of the Quad, both ASEAN and Quad need to find a middle ground that would benefit and better their relationship in the long run.

17  
MAR

## ISAS Book Launch and Panel Discussion (Hybrid) Role of Small States in Emerging Maritime Affairs

ISAS organised a book launch and panel discussion on the role of small states in emerging maritime affairs on 17 March 2021. The book, titled *Maritime Sri Lanka: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, was launched by HE Sashikala Premawardhane, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Singapore.

Delivering the keynote address for the event, Admiral (Professor) Jayanath Colombage, Foreign Secretary of Sri Lanka, discussed the emerging trends in the Indian Ocean, including the politicisation of maritime trade, maritime-related infrastructure and increased militarisation of the Indian Ocean region. Maritime trade, according to Admiral Colombage, is expected to bounce back and the significance of the ocean is only set to increase.

The first speaker on the panel, Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja, Senior Visiting Fellow, Pathfinder Foundation, Sri Lanka; and Non-Resident Senior Fellow, ISAS, stressed on the need for a global long-term strategy to sustain maritime trade. The second speaker, Dr David Brewster, Senior Research Fellow, National Security College, Australian National University, Canberra, discussed the options available to small states in maritime affairs. Mr John Bradford, Senior Fellow, Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, then discussed the maritime



trade routes around the Indian Ocean. The final speaker, Dr Chulanee Attanayake, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, touched on the strategic autonomy and climate vulnerability of small states.

19  
APR

### **COSATT-ISAS-KAS Workshop (Hybrid Event)** **Nepal's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping**



On 19 April 2021, ISAS, the Consortium of South Asia Think Tanks and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung organised a workshop on 'Nepal's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping'. The workshop brought together experts from different countries to discuss the factors influencing Nepal's enthusiastic support for the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations.

The workshop highlighted that Nepal's contribution was not limited to the army and police but also expanded to engineering professionals and doctors. They opined that Kathmandu's position to promote international peace and security remained one of the main motivations behind its participation in UN missions. However, despite its immense contribution, Nepalese officials fail to acquire senior-level positions in the UN. Attempting to reason this, the speakers analysed that the Nepal government lacked adequate efforts to pitch for its officials at the UN headquarters. Additionally, they agreed that the recruitment of senior officials in the organisation could sometimes be politically motivated.

The workshop discussed possible measures to resolve these issues. The speakers agreed that Nepal should increase funding for its troops and also be mindful of appointing notable diplomats as representatives to the organisation. The session concluded that the Nepal government should assert itself more in order to gain senior positions in the UN.

29  
APR

### **KAS-ISAS-CfDS Panel Discussion (Hybrid Event)** **Regulating Data in India and Indonesia**



ISAS, Center for Digital Societies (CfDS), University of Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia, and the Rule of Law Program, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, published a special report on 'Regulating Data in India and Indonesia'. Authored by Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Dr Mulya Amri, Adjunct Researcher, CfDS, UGM, the report covers India and Indonesia's efforts to regulate data or create rules that govern how data is collected, processed, stored and shared.

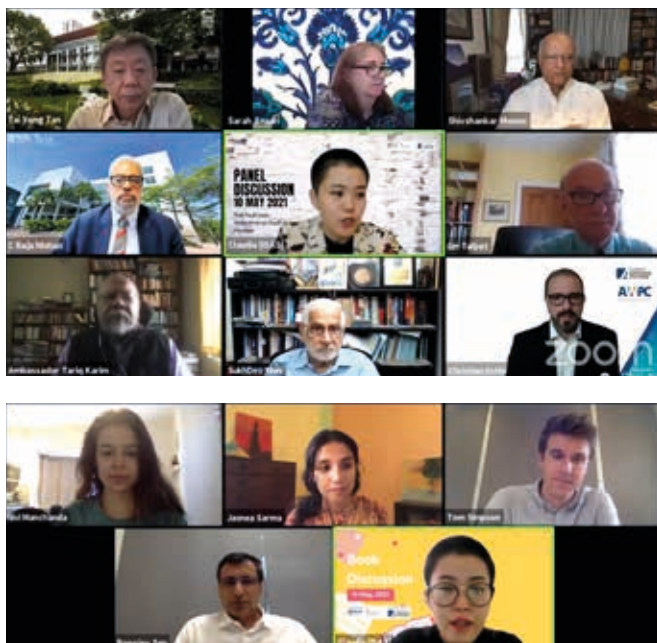
On 29 April 2021, the three organisations launched the report and organised a panel discussion. Dr Nachiappan provided an overview of the importance of looking at India and Indonesia as potential models for data governance and how the report is structured. He then went on to describe the process of creating a data governance framework that India has attempted. Dr Amri then touched on the status of the data governance framework in Indonesia and highlighted how the data governance framework is very fragmented and incomplete due to different legislations governing the different sectors.

Following the presentation, Dr Natalie Pang, Senior Lecturer, Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore, joined them as a discussant. She spoke on the interaction between regulations and its effects on innovation across Asia. During the discussion session, the panellists discussed how policy and legislation could keep pace with technological change.

10-19  
MAY

## ISAS-KAS International Conference on South Asia 2021

### Five Fault Lines: Reflections on South Asian Frontiers



From 10 to 19 May 2021, ISAS partnered with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) to organise the annual flagship International Conference on South Asia. The conference, titled 'Five Fault Lines: Reflections on South Asian Frontiers', aimed to understand, reflect on and analyse the origins of frontiers and boundaries in South Asia, which were drawn during the colonial period, tracing their evolution and examining their contemporary relevance. The discussions during the conference sought to commemorate 75 years of the 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent, the anniversary of which falls in 2022.

The event comprised an opening panel on 10 May 2021, followed by a series of roundtable discussions from 11 to 18 May 2021, and it ended with a book discussion on 19 May 2021. Over the course of a week, scholars and practitioners from different disciplines around the globe, working on South Asian borderlands and frontiers, gathered to deliberate on and chart out critical themes and directions for research into these dynamic spaces. The discussions, held virtually, centred on the 'five fault lines' in South Asia, namely, the Durand Line (between Afghanistan and Pakistan); the Radcliffe Line (between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh); the McMahon Line (between India and China); the disputed lines in Kashmir (between India, China and Pakistan) and the Myanmar borderlands (between India, Bangladesh and Myanmar).

On 10 May 2021, the opening panel provided an overarching view on the creation of borders and its impact in South Asia. The discussions by the panellists elucidated the origins, contestations and impact of borders in South Asia. It also provided a timely analysis of how the inheritance of borders from the colonial times led to the emergence of South Asian states into a Westphalian order that emphasised heavily on hard sovereignty and precise boundaries. As the region is composed of old nations in new states, with porous borders, every boundary has cross-border ethnicities, which compounded the difficulties of border enforcement and management.

Further, attention was drawn to the overlapping themes of politics and how religions and geographic limitations resulted in specific issues remaining unresolvable. The ambiguous nature of existing borders continues to ensure that South Asian states keep on negotiating them.

Post-Cold War legacies and other factors such as historical influence have also led to a build-up in the modern states' 'cartographic anxiety'. Increasingly, borders are viewed as inseparable to sovereignty, making them integral for foreign relations between the states in South Asia and domestic policy discussions. The perceptions of state officials towards the marking of boundaries and the ways in which locals interact with the state and everyday lives in borderlands also contribute to the making of borders and frontiers. It is, therefore, important for academics and policy makers to move beyond peripheral regions and zones of exchange to emphasise cross-community interactions across borders.

From 11 to 18 May 2021, each individual 'fault line' was discussed in the respective roundtables.

First, the 'Durand Line' roundtable brought up the nuanced complexities of the region and the impact of colonialism and imperialism. By understanding the contested legality of the Durand Line, the tensions between colonial institutions, the locals, and the overlap of the regional and international developments, we could better comprehend the internal dynamics.



The second roundtable on the 'McMahon Line' highlighted how local communities are witnessing an increased state presence, evidenced by significant infrastructural development and pervasion of the Hindi language in the borderlands. It also analysed the intertwined positional and territorial dimensions along the Tibetan border that further complicated China-India relationship.

The third roundtable focused on the varying border arrangements, cross-border trading activities and political rights of citizens in different parts of Kashmir. The Pakistan-China border was also explored. As the Line of Control is not recognised as an international border and remains contested between India and Pakistan, arrangements in trade, border management, securitisation efforts and exercise of rights have been difficult and continue to implicate local lives.

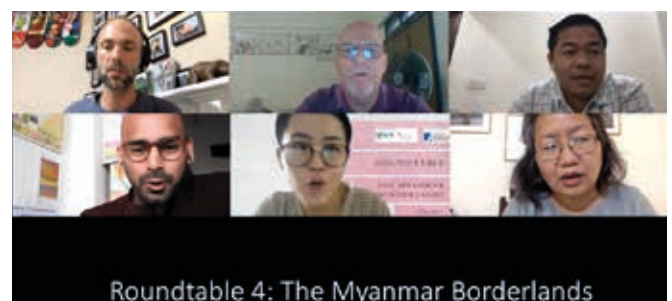
The fourth roundtable on the 'Myanmar borderlands' discussed the contemporary dynamics of ethnicity and identity on either side of the border, resource frontiers, role of non-state actors and how the indigenous communities in borderlands navigate in the borderlands vis-à-vis official control and rules.

The fifth roundtable on the 'Radcliffe Line' touched on issues of citizenship, repression and refuge in borderlands, scope of the European modes of surveying and mapping geographies and the cross-generational kinship networks across borders.

On the last day, two recently published books – Dr Nivi Manchanda's *Imagining Afghanistan: The History and Politics of Imperial Knowledge* and Dr Thomas Simpson's *The Frontier in British India: Space, Science, and Power in the Nineteenth Century* – were discussed. Dr Jasnea Sarma, Postdoctoral Fellow, was the discussant while Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), both from ISAS, chaired the session.

During their presentations, the authors touched upon the intricacies and significance of the processes and technologies of knowledge production in both the colonial and modern frontier-making project in Afghanistan and British India. The panellists discussed the implications of colonial objectification of frontiers and the importance of using diverse perspectives to understand its construction.

The conference drew on the emerging literatures and debates on South Asian borderlands and frontiers to chart out new directions and critical themes for research into these regions, both in and beyond academia.



## ISAS Events Listing (January to June 2021)

EAI-ISAS Roundtable	<b>New Himalayan Dynamics: Emerging Geostrategic Dimensions of Sino-Indian Relationship</b>	13 January 2021
ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion	<b>Institutionalising the QUAD: Can it seize the momentum for future?</b>	20 January 2021
ISAS Book Discussion	<b>India's First Dictatorship</b>	3 February 2021
ISAS-SICCI Roundtable	<b>Union Budget 2021: Prospects for the Indian Economy</b>	10 February 2021
ISAS Roundtable	<b>Challenges and Opportunities of LDC's Graduation in the Pandemic</b>	17 February 2021
ISAS Roundtable	<b>The Cost of Restraint: Explaining China's Differential Response to China and Pakistan as Nuclear Threats</b>	26 February 2021
ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion	<b>The QUAD and ASEAN: The Way Forward</b>	4 March 2021
ESI-ISAS Roundtable	<b>Regional Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal: The Role of Energy Security and Maritime Governance in Promoting Integration</b>	11 March 2021
ISAS Book Launch and Panel Discussion (Hybrid Event)	<b>Role of Small States in Emerging Maritime Affairs</b>	17 March 2021
ISAS-SPF Workshop (Session 1)	<b>Europe's Resident Powers in the Indo Pacific</b>	24 March 2021
ISAS-SPF Workshop (Session 2)	<b>Continental Europe and the Indo-Pacific</b>	14 April 2021
COSATT-ISAS-KAS Workshop (Hybrid Event)	<b>Nepal's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping</b>	19 April 2021
KAS-ISAS-CfDS Panel Discussion (Hybrid Event)	<b>Regulating Data in India and Indonesia</b>	29 April 2021
International Conference on South Asia 2021 (Panel Discussion)	<b>Five Fault Lines: Reflections on Geopolitics in South Asia</b>	10 May 2021
ISAS-SPF Workshop (Session 3)	<b>Regional Perceptions of Europe's Push into the Indo-Pacific</b>	11 May 2021
International Conference on South Asia 2021 (Roundtables)	<b>Five Fault Lines: Reflections on Geopolitics in South Asia</b>	11–18 May 2021
International Conference on South Asia 2021 (Book Discussion)	<b>Five Fault Lines: Reflections on Geopolitics in South Asia</b>	19 May 2021
ISAS Panel Discussion	<b>Russia and the Indo-Pacific</b>	31 May 2021
MEI-ISAS Panel Discussion	<b>Beyond the Chokepoints: The New Geopolitics of Arabian-Sea Ports</b>	9 June 2021
ISAS-UOS Conference	<b>City and Environmental History in South Asia</b>	30 June–1 July 2021

Note: Webinar unless otherwise stated

# LATEST SPECIAL REPORTS, SOUTH ASIAN DISCUSSION PAPERS AND SOUTH ASIA SCAN

Taking a deeper look at the latest and most pertinent developments happening in and around South Asia are ISAS' Special Reports, South Asia Discussion Papers and the South Asia Scan.

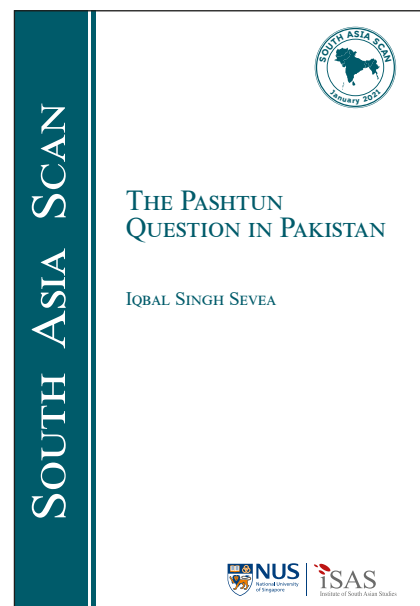
During the first half of 2021, we brought out six Special Reports, one South Asia Discussion Papers series and three South Asia Scans, comprehensively analysing issues related to the subcontinent. Some of these publications have been jointly written with partner institutes and feature scholars from diverse backgrounds.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) gained prominence this year after American President Joe Biden called for a virtual summit with the leaders of India, Japan and Australia in March 2021. In this context, we brought out two reports based on joint roundtables with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Tokyo – *Biden's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Expectations and Challenges and Institutionalising the Quad: Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future?* Authored variously by Dr Yogesh Joshi, Mr Ippeita Nishida, Ms Archana Atmakuri and Mr Nishant Rajeev, these analysed the multiple challenges faced by the Biden administration, an assertive China and the dilemmas that the member states could face going forward.

Continuing with the same theme, Dr Vinay Kaura authored a South Asia Scan on *Formalising the Quadrilateral: India's Evolving Indo-Pacific Strategy*, which proposed that the four countries should be proactive in making the Quad an institutionalised mechanism for Indo-Pacific security cooperation, with a focus on preserving and protecting the democratic values of like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific without interfering or allowing others to interfere in their domestic politics.

Technology and digital connectivity also featured prominently in two Special Reports published recently. *Fostering Digital Connectivity in and with the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities for the European Union*, is a joint publication by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael (or Clingendael Institute) and ISAS. It assesses tangible steps for the European Union to build partnerships with like-minded partners from the Asia-Europe Meeting to advance digital connectivity in and with the Indo-Pacific region, in line with its principles, approaches and standards on digitalisation.

*Regulating Data in India and Indonesia: A Comparative Study*, another policy report, has been jointly prepared by ISAS and the Center for Digital Society, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, for the Rule of Law Programme Asia at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Singapore. It comprehensively covers how India and Indonesia have sought to regulate data. The report not only looks at the fragmented landscape for data regulation in these two countries which could soon give way to a comprehensive new law on personal data protection, but also the challenges concerning the implementation and enforcement of these data laws once enacted.





ISAS, in collaboration with the Energy Studies Institute at the National University of Singapore, brought out *Regional Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal: The Role of Energy Security and Maritime Governance in Promoting Integration*, a report that explores the role of energy security and maritime governance in promoting regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal. It also tries to identify the key challenges and opportunities in this emerging subregion, offering suggestions on common action points.

The military coup in Myanmar on 1 February 2021 resulted in Dr Jasnea Sarma and Ms Roshni Kapur reviewing the wide spread protests that happened across the country. *The Myanmar Coup, Resistance and India's Response: Fractured between Words and Deeds* also provides updates on the Tatmadaw's actions and examines the reasons for India's position which are fractured between its diplomatic statements upholding democracy in Myanmar which is tempered by its links with the military forged to manage its geopolitical and national interests

The South Asia Discussion Papers, titled *President Biden and South Asia*, edited by Professor C Raja Mohan and Mr John Vater, is a collection of scholarly writings that offer valuable perspectives on the implications of the Biden administration on bilateral relations with the subcontinent as well as touches upon important issues like immigration and trade. That Biden selected Senator Kamala Harris as his vice president, whose mother hailed from Tamil Nadu in India, also added a special dimension to the regional interest.

Two South Asia Scans – *The Pashtun Question in Pakistan* by Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea and *South Asia's Critical Medical Imports, Products, Sources and Vulnerabilities* by Dr Amitendu Palit – lend further diversity to our publications. The first examines the factors that led to the marginalisation of sections of the Pashtun community in Pakistan and the recent re-emergence of its political mobilisation while the second is an attempt to study the imports of critical medical items by the South Asian region in the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

## Books

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*President Biden and South Asia*, Edited by C. Raja Mohan, Director, ISAS; and John Vater, Research Associate, ISAS, January 2021

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*Biden's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Expectations and Challenges*, Dr Yogesh Joshi, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Archana Atmakuri, Research Analyst, ISAS, 18 February 2021

*Fostering Digital Connectivity in and with the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities for the European Union*, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS; Dr Maaïke Okano-Heijmans, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague; and Ms Brigitte Dekker, Junior Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague, 22 April 2021

*Institutionalising the Quad: Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future*, Dr Yogesh Joshi, Research Fellow, ISAS; Mr Ippeita Nishida, Senior Research Fellow, Sasakawa Peace Foundation; and Mr Nishant Rajeev, Research Analyst, ISAS, 27 April 2021

*Regulating Data in India and Indonesia: A Comparative Study*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; ISAS; and Center for Digital Society, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Multiple authors, 28 May 2021

*Regional Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal: The Role of Energy Security and Maritime Governance in Promoting Integration*, Dr Christopher Len, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Publications, Energy Studies Institute; and Roshni Kapur, Former Research Analyst, ISAS, 29 June 2021

*The Myanmar Coup, Resistance and India's Response: Fractured Between Words and Deeds*, Dr Jasnea Sarma, Post-doctoral Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Roshni Kapur, Former Research Analyst, ISAS, 29 June 2021

### Briefs

- 817** Islam or the Constitution? Islamabad's Shri Krishna Temple Dilemma, Dr Imran Ahmed, Consultant, ISAS, 29 December 2020
- 818** Sri Lanka in 2021: Foreign Policy Prognosis, Dr Chulanee Attanakyake, Research Fellow, ISAS, 18 January 2021
- 819** Post COVID-19: Positioning Sri Lanka as South Asia's Dubai, Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, ISAS, 25 January 2021
- 820** India's Vaccine Diplomacy, Ms Ramita Iyer, Research Analyst, ISAS; and Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 28 January 2021
- 821** Should Pakistan recognise Israel?, Professor Touqir Hussain, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 29 January 2021
- 822** India Extends 'Vaccine Maitri' to its Neighbours, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 1 February 2021
- 823** Pakistan's COVID-19 Challenges: Supplies, Trust, Transparency and Co-operation, Dr Imran Ahmed, Consultant, ISAS, 2 February 2021
- 824** India Budget 2021-22: Reforms Generate Opposition, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow; and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), ISAS, 3 February 2021
- 825** India Budget 2021-22: Focus on Reform and Divestment, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 4 February 2021
- 826** Indian Budget 2020-21: A Push for Growth, Dr S Narayan, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 5 February 2021
- 827** India Loses the East Container Terminal: How Domestic Politics Rocked the Ship, Dr S Narayan, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 10 February 2021
- 828** India's Democratic Backsliding, Dr Diego Maiorano, Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 March 2021
- 829** Kashmir Ceasefire Deal: The Rationale and The Next Step, Professor Touqir Hussain, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 9 March 2021
- 830** Biden's Afghan Peace Initiative, Professor C Raja Mohan, Director, ISAS, 9 March 2021
- 831** India's New Internet Governance Framework, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow ISAS; and Mr Nishant Rajeev, Research Analyst, ISAS, 11 March 2021
- 832** Prime Minister Modi Visits Dhaka: Enhancing Bangladesh-India Ties, Ms Kunthavi Kalachelvam, Research Trainee, ISAS; Ms Wini Fred Gurung, Research Analyst, ISAS; and Dr Mohammad Masudur Rahman, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 5 April 2021
- 833** *Aurat March*: The Struggle for Law Reform and Women's Rights in Pakistan, Ms Kunthavi Kalachelvam, Research Trainee, ISAS; and Dr Imran Ahmed, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 26 April 2021

834	Addressing Vaccine Shortage: Flexible Trade Rules for Compulsory Licences, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy), ISAS; and Ms Mekhla Jha, Student Research Assistant, 29 April 2021
835	Breaking a 40-year Jinx in Kerala: Left Democratic Front Returns to Power, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 3 May 2021
836	Tamil Nadu Elections 2021: Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam back in the Driver's Seat, Dr S Narayan, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISAS, 4 May 2021
837	Access to Affordable COVID-19 Vaccines: Need for Patent Obligation Relaxation, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy), ISAS; and Ms Mekhla Jha, Student Research Assistant, ISAS, 5 May 2021
838	Pakistan's Struggle Within: Religious Politics and Interfaith Harmony, Dr Imran Ahmed, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 14 May 2021
839	India Records High Agricultural Export Growth amidst COVID-19 Pandemic, Ms Divya Murali, Research Analyst, ISAS; and Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy), ISAS, 14 May 2021
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843	Big Tech confronts India's Internet Governance Framework, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Mr Nishant Rajeev, Research Assistant, ISAS, 2 June 2021
844	Suppression and Silencing: The Attack on Asad Toor, Press Freedom and Media Laws in Pakistan, Dr Imran Ahmed, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 June 2021
845	India's Industrial Raw Materials and Food Exports: Emergence of China as Important and Distinct Market, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy), ISAS, 10 June 2021
846	US Reviews Resilient Supply Chains: What's in Store for India?, Dr Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economic Policy), ISAS, 29 June 2021

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652	Resetting the Relationship: India's Recent Engagements with Nepal, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Wini Fred Gurung, Research Analyst, ISAS, 24 December 2020
653	District Development Councils: A Precursor to Assembly Elections?, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 8 January 2021
654	Indian Government's Bold Banking Reforms: Timely Implementation Key to Success, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 2 March 2021
655	The Politics of Eliminating <i>Riba</i> : Tensions between Secular and Islamic Courts, Dr Imran Ahmed, Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 4 March 2021
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657	India-Australia Cooperation on Trade in Critical Minerals, Ms Natasha Jha Bhaskar, General Manager, Newland Global Group, 18 March 2021
658	Mamata faces Strong BJP Challenge in Bengal, Dr Ronojoy Sen, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Politics, Society and Governance), ISAS, 26 March 2021



659	China-India Relations: How Different Perceptions Shape the Future, Mr Zheng Haiqi, Visiting Research Scholar, ISAS, 1 April 2021
660	Nutritional Consequence of the Lockdown in India: Indications from the World Bank's Rural Shock Survey, Dr Diego Maiorano, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Divya Murali, Research Analyst, ISAS, 6 April 2021
661	Reconciling Regional Differences: Pivotal to Afghan Reconciliation, Dr Vinay Kaura, Assistant Professor, Sardar Patel University of Police, 12 April 2021
662	The V-shaped COVID-19 Surge in India: How will it impact Growth?, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 19 April 2021
663	India and Emerging Technology Coalitions, Dr Karthik Nachiappan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Mr Nishant Rajeev, Research Analyst, ISAS, 10 May 2021
664	India's State Elections: Implications for the BJP, Dr Diego Maiorano, Research Fellow, ISAS, 14 May 2021
665	Europe's Indo-Pacific Adoption: Two Southeast Asian Challenges, Dr Malcolm Cook, Visiting Research Fellow, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 17 May 2021
666	Mohamed Nasheed Attacked: Rise of Islamic Radicalism in the Maldives, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 18 May 2021
667	Sri Lanka in a Post COVID-19 World: Balancing Ties with the Great Powers, Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, ISAS, 18 May 2021
668	COVID-19 Lockdown in India: Impact on the Poor and the Government's Response, Ms Ramita Iyer, Research Analyst, ISAS; and Dr Diego Maiorano, Research Fellow, ISAS, 19 May 2021
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670	K P Oli Loses Trust Vote: Nepal in a Political Crisis, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow ISAS; and Ms Wini Fred Gurung, Research Analyst, ISAS, 20 May 2021
671	China's Rare Earth Dominance: Exploring Australia-India Partnership, Mr Ryan Seah, Research Trainee, ISAS; and Dr Yogesh Joshi, Research Fellow, ISAS, 25 May 2021
672	Personality Supreme in Kerala: Is this the New Normal among Political Parties, Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 31 May 2021
673	The European Union and the Indo-Pacific: Exploring the Nexus, Mr Zheng Haiqi, Visiting Research Scholar, ISAS; and Ms Claudia Chia, Research Analyst, ISAS, 3 June 2021
674	Myanmar Coup and the Rohingya Crisis: Responses from across South Asia, Dr Jasnea Sarma, Post-doctoral Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Roshni Kapur, Former Research Analyst, ISAS, 8 June 2021
675	China's Pandemic Diplomacy in South Asia, Dr Chulanee Attanayake, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Mr Zheng Haiqi, Visiting Research Scholar, ISAS, 15 June 2021
676	The West Bengal Standoff: Misguided Actions around Modi's Visit Mr Vinod Rai, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, ISAS, 21 June 2021
677	Exploring China's Afghanistan Policy, Ms Claudia Chia, Research Analyst, ISAS; Ms Kunthavi Kalachelvam, Former Research Trainee, ISAS; and Mr Zheng Haiqi, Visiting Research Scholar, ISAS, 25 June 2021

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338	2020 Myanmar Elections: No Signs of Change for the Rohingyas, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS; and Ms Roshni Kapur, Research Analyst, ISAS, 5 January 2021
339	Pakistan in Sri Lanka's Changing Foreign Policy, Mr Asanga Abeyagoonasekara, Geopolitical Analyst and Author, Senior Researcher for Social Impact (United States), 1 April 2021
340	Prime Minister Imran Khan's Visit to Sri Lanka: Current Ties and Future Partnership, Dr Chulanee Attanayake, Research Fellow, ISAS, 1 April 2021

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- 341** China's Territorial Claims and Infringement in Bhutan: Concerns for India, Ms Wini Fred Gurung, Research Assistant, ISAS; and Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 1 April 2021
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- 342** Siliconpolitik: The Case for a Quad Semiconductor Partnership, Dr Pranay Kotasthane, Chairperson of the High-Tech Geopolitics Programme at the Takshashila Institution, 26 April 2021
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- 343** Narendra Modi's Visit to Bangladesh: Bilateral Agreements and Electoral Calculations, Dr Amit Ranjan, Research Fellow, ISAS, 29 April 2021
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- 344** Human Rights, Geopolitics and National Priorities: Managing Fluctuations in US-Sri Lanka Relations, Ms Roshni Kapur, Former Research Analyst, ISAS; and Dr Chulanee Attanayake, Research Fellow, ISAS, 2 June 2021
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- 345** The Indus Waters Treaty: Prospects for India-Pakistan Peace, Mr John Vater, Research Associate, 23 June 2021
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Dinyar Patel. *Naraji – Pioneer of Indian Nationalism*. Harvard University Press, 2020. (Reviewed by Dr Ronojoy Sen, 22 January 2021)

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