

ICS Update



DEAR FRIENDS,

The **Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)** maintained its regular activities related to disseminating informed analyses and generating debates and discussions covering a gamut of themes related to China and East Asia.

The **Internship** programme continues to attract fresh talent and we receive a large number of applications. The ICS is now a well-known dynamic and interactive place for young and aspiring scholars, interested in Chinese and East Asian Studies. One new intern joined Team ICS in January 2024.

New Team Member Alert

BHAGYASHREE NIMBALKAR, RESEARCH INTERN

Bhagyashree Nimbalkar is currently pursuing a PhD in Chinese Studies from CEAS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She holds a Master's degree in Politics with a specialization in International Relations.

She is passionate about unravelling the intricate tapestry of the international-domestic interface of China. From delving into historical perspectives, to analysing contemporary geopolitical shifts, her commitment to understanding China's role on the global stage drives her pursuit of knowledge. She is also keenly interested in issues pertaining to higher education and the S&T sector in China.

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EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The ICS conducted a total of eight events in December 2023 and January 2024: one *conference*, and seven *seminars*.

DECEMBER

On 13 December 2023, the Institute conducted a seminar on **India and China: Some Comparative Thoughts in Relation to Child Marriage**. The speaker was **Prof. Mary E. John**, Former Director & Professor, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. Prof. John noted that the current marriage and family dynamics in China and India have distinct and different focal points. For instance, China grapples with imbalanced sex ratios, while India is confronted with the continuous challenge of early marriages. She also stressed the importance of studying how media depicts underage/teenage marriages in specific Chinese provinces, citing significant under-reporting and highlighting the need for understanding media representations in both countries. The chair, **Prof. Govind Kelkar**, Executive Director of the GenDev Centre for Research and Innovation in Gurgaon and Adjunct Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, began the session with a comparison between Indian and Chinese women. She noted that China's 'Going-Out Policy' encouraged women to work outside the home, leading to significant social changes as they interacted with others and chose their partners, whereas India has shown little social transformation despite adjustments in the age of marriage. Prof. Kelkar also stressed the necessity of implementing changes to enhance women's conditions, both legally and socially. ([YouTube](#))

The second seminar, titled **Contested (Geo)Politics of Reincarnation: Tibet and China**, was conducted on 20 December 2023. The speaker of the session was **Prof. Dibyesh Anand**, Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Employability), University of Westminster, London. Prof. Anand underscored the sacred importance of reincarnation for Tibetans. Reincarnation holds deep significance in Tibetan Buddhism and the socio-political landscape of Tibet and the Himalayas for centuries. Nonetheless, while modern nation-states prioritize territoriality and sovereignty, reincarnation challenges both principles. The presentation contested the notion of a modern nation-state ruled by an atheist party, claiming final authority over non-secular subjects. According to the speaker, the PRC has proclaimed itself as the protector of the tradition by following the Golden Urn system, which involved drawing lots or tally sticks from a Golden Urn for selecting reincarnations. **Dr. Tshering Chonzom Bhutia**, Advisor and In-charge at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), and Associate Editor of India Quarterly, expertly chaired this engrossing session. She provided a comprehensive historical context to the discussion, highlighting the involvement of various Chinese regimes in reincarnation/co-opting of Tibetan lamas and tussles with the Dalai Lama over the selection of 10th Lama. ([YouTube](#))



From 4 to 6 December 2023, the Institute of Chinese Studies organised its annual flagship conference, **the 6th India Forum on China (IFC) @Mumbai**, in cooperation with the Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Centre for Advanced Policy Research and Initiatives (CAPRI), Yashwantrao Chavan Centre, University of Mumbai, and CKT College, at the Nehru Centre, Worli. The theme of the Conference was **The BRI Transformed? China's New Global Initiatives on 'Development', 'Security' and 'Civilization'.**

The conference examined different aspects of China's international politics and global governance through a policy-oriented lens. The conference explored China's projects and narratives on connectivity, the environment, science & technology, history, political systems, and global values under the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) frameworks. Various presenters discussed the implications of these initiatives, their impact on regional and global security architecture, Chinese political culture, and China's rivalry with other major powers. The discussions provided nuanced insights into China's global initiatives and their implications for global governance.

Prof. Alka Acharya, Honorary Director of ICS and Chair for the Inaugural Session, highlighted how the themes of China's new initiatives resonate with the aspirations of people in developing countries. **Dr. Ajit Ranade**, Vice-Chancellor of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, delivered the Keynote Address titled "Engaging With China: Options and Strategies." He stressed the significance of India-China engagement, given their combined population and economic weight. Dr. Ranade discussed the need for India to secure a market share in China's consumer economy and attract Chinese capital to address trade deficits and foster economic growth. **Shri Sharad Pawar**, former Minister of Defence, was scheduled to deliver a Congratulatory Message, but his presence in the Indian parliamentary session prevented his participation. However, his message, read out by Ms. Mohini, underscored China's rising influence in international politics and its expansion of multilateral architectures, including the Belt and Road Initiative and the new Global Initiatives. Shri Sharad Pawar congratulated the Institute of Chinese Studies and other organizers for convening the 6th IFC @Mumbai. Concluding the Inaugural session, **Dr. Aravind Yelery**, Convener of the 6th IFC @Mumbai and Associate Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, delivered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants and organizers for their contributions to the comprehensive debates and discussions on the significance of China in the current global context.

The Conference featured a wide range of scholars and practitioners from India and around the world, who deliberated upon the implications of China's latest initiatives. The list of presenters included Dr. Rajiv Ranjan, Dr. Dilini Pathirana, Dr. Sadia Rehman, Dr. Lin Ya-ling, Mr. Amit Bhandari, Dr. Shen Ming-shih, Lt. Gen. S.L. Narasimhan, Dr. David O. Shullman, Dr. Wu Tsung-han, Dr. Anand P. Krishnan, Dr. Shih Chien-yu, Dr. Abbos Bobokhonov, and Dr. Parimal Maya Sudhakar.

JANUARY

The new year commenced with an engaging seminar held on 3 January 2024 on the topic, **Northern Girls: Avant-garde Fiction in Reform China**. **Dr. Snigdha Konar**, Research Associate, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, was the speaker for the session. The seminar focused on Sheng Keyi's critically acclaimed novel, *Northern Girls*. According to Dr. Konar, Sheng Keyi was the first to introduce women from the lower strata in popular fiction. Sheng draws from her experiences as a migrant worker, thus adding a semi-autobiographical element to the book as well. The speaker pointed out that although it is a work of fiction, it reflects elements of reality. She noted that cities have become paradoxical in nature. On one hand, they provide the opportunity for migrant workers to ascend the economic ladder, while on the other, they deprive them of even the basic standards of living. The chair, **Dr. Manju Rani Hara**, Associate Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, also provided her unique perspectives on the literary landscape in China. She dwelt on the world of China's avant-garde fiction, which challenges conventional storytelling, delving into myths, puzzles, and societal critiques with a bold narrative style. ([YouTube](#))

The second seminar, titled **Why China will Avoid an All-Out Confrontation with the US in the Middle East Following the Gaza War**, was held on 10 January 2024. The speaker of the session was **Mr. Atul Aneja**, Editor, India Narrative, New Delhi. The seminar focused on how Xi Jinping's leadership has marked a "new era" in China's foreign policy, wherein it is asserting its core interests more openly. As a result, China has also reconfigured its global partnerships. Amid the US-China rivalry, China's outreach to the Middle East has become more purpose-oriented to fulfill oil needs, which has also influenced its approach to the Gaza conflict. Instead of the Palestine issue, China's focus is on securing its core interests in Eurasia. China has prioritised the maintenance of stability in the region, which acts as a crucial defence line for Chinese interests. **Dr. Hemant Adlakha**, Associate Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, chaired the session, offering valuable insights on the US-China rivalry. He underlined the ideological differences between Chinese and American military forces, additionally noting the absence of any clear indication from China about directly confronting the US in the Middle East or replacing its military presence following the events of 7 October 2023 (Israel-Hamas Conflict). ([YouTube](#))

On 17 January 2024, the institution organised a seminar on **China and India – Imponderable Bilateral**. The speaker of the session was **Dr. Raviprasad Narayanan**, Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The speaker brought out the need to explore unconventional perspectives to comprehend the intricate dynamics of the India-China bilateral relationship. This "imponderable bilateral" relationship is marked by long-standing tensions rooted in divergent institutions, governance styles, and social imperatives. The complex historical connections between India and China are marred by a lack of trust and transparency in their negotiations, proving to be a significant obstacle in resolving mutual issues. The chair, **Amb. Vijay K Nambiar**, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Former Indian Ambassador and Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, shared his reflections on India-China relations, citing the construction of a dam near Arunachal Pradesh and the selection of the next Dalai Lama as additional "imponderables". Emphasising the importance of understanding the needs and interests of local population in borderlands, he concluded by stressing the necessity to foster scholarly debates for a more comprehensive approach. ([YouTube](#))

The fourth seminar, titled **'Silk Road Economic Belt' (2013) to 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' (2023): Deciphering Xi Jinping's World View**, was presented by **Dr. Parimal Maya Sudhakar**, Associate Professor & Associate Dean- External Relations, MIT School of Government (MIT-SOG), Pune, on 24 January 2024. Dr. Sudhakar began by noting that Xi Jinping's leadership has marked a fundamental shift in China's foreign policy, from maintaining a low profile to actively striving for achievements. He highlighted Xi Jinping's emphasis on China's role as a major power on the global stage, linking this rise to the PRC's "national rejuvenation". Furthermore, it was noted that the Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) aims to project China as the driving force towards promoting cooperation and mutual learning among civilisations. It also presents an alternative to Western liberalism, and a non-confrontational approach to global governance. The session was chaired by **Dr. Jabin T. Jacob**, Director, Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies & Associate Professor, Department of International Relations & Governance Studies, Shiv Nadar University, Delhi NCR; Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi. Dr. Jacob accentuated the nuanced dimensions of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), urging a re-evaluation beyond mere economic lenses to recognize its strategic and foreign policy implications. He also highlighted the need to critically examine the PRC's strategies of national rejuvenation and the transition of the CCP's leadership, in the context of China's new Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI). ([YouTube](#))

The fifth seminar titled **The US-Japan Alliance: Prospects and Challenges under Japan's Recent National Security Strategy**, was organised on 31 January 2024. **Prof. Tomohito Shinoda**, Professor, Graduate School of International Relations & Director, Matsushita Library and Information Center, International University of Japan, Niigata, was the speaker of the session. He elaborated on the Abe administration's maritime security strategy, with a focus on a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". Contrasting the post-WWII security tradition with the recent National Security Strategy, Prof. Shinoda highlighted the shift in Japanese policy, from maintaining minimum defence capabilities to significantly enhancing them. He also brought in critical variables which might shape the Japanese policy direction in the future, with a stronger US-Japan relationship, allowing for an East Asian community under their leadership, as against a modern-day tributary system under Chinese hegemony. The session was chaired by **Prof. Srabani Roy Choudhury**, Professor, Japanese Studies, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi. Prof. Roy Choudhury shed light on Japan's evolving security stance in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly amidst increasing alignment with countries leaning towards China. She elaborated on how the shift towards a more robust maritime security strategy underscores Japan's commitment to fostering a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. ([YouTube](#))

PUBLICATIONS

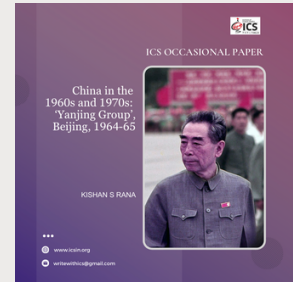
Visieno Kiso, Research Scholar, the Centre of East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, authored an article on Japanese Pop Culture's Response to COVID-19: Embracing Digitalization and Hybridization, which was published under ICS Occasional Papers, in December 2023.

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Kishan S. Rana, Honorary Fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, wrote on China in the 1960s and 1970s: 'Yanjing Group', Beijing, 1964-65, which was published under ICS Occasional Papers, in January 2024.

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Sreejith Sasidharan, an independent analyst, wrote On Historical Forces Which Shaped India-China Peace and Tranquility Agreement, which was published under ICS Working Papers, in December 2023.

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FACULTY UPDATE

DECEMBER

Anand P. Krishnan, Fellow, Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi-NCR; and, Visiting Associate Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), New Delhi, presented a paper titled, "Private Military Contractors and China's GSI", in Session IV, "The Global Security Initiative – II", at the 6th India Forum on China @Mumbai, on 5 December 2023.

Jabin T. Jacob, Director, Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies; Associate Professor, Department of International Relations and Governance Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi-NCR; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, presented a paper on "China's Evolving Grey Zone Strategy and Its Manifestation on the Northern Borders" at the 2023 China Seminar organised by Eastern Army Command, Kolkata on 1 December 2022. Dr. Jacob chaired Session III titled, "The Global Security Initiative – I" at the 6th India Forum on China @Mumbai, on 5 December 2023. Furthermore, he presented a paper on "A China-sized Gap in India-Turkey Relations" at the At The Crossroads: Türkiye-India Relations Seminar, organised by Yıldız Teknik University, Davutpasa Campus Istanbul, Türkiye on 20 December 2023. Dr. Jacob also penned an article on "امریکہ کی چین کی سمجھ ناقص ہے" (America has a poor understanding of China), for The Inquilab on 18 December 2023. Additionally, he wrote on "کیا ایک پولرائزڈ ہندوستان چین کے آگے بندھ" (Can a polarized India deal with China?), for Mumbai Urdu News on 28 December 2023.

Priyanka Pandit, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations and Governance Studies, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi-NCR, delivered a talk on “The Internationalisation Paradox: China’s State-Owned Enterprises and Global Development Initiative”, in Session II titled, “The Global Development Initiative – II”, at the 6th India Forum on China @Mumbai, on 5 December 2023.

Rajiv Ranjan, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Delhi; and, Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, presented a paper titled, “Global Development Initiative and Sustainable Development Goals: Casting ‘Chinese Ideology’ in Developmental Leadership”, in Session I, “The Global Development Initiative – I”, at the 6th India Forum on China @Mumbai, on 5 December 2023.

Samanvya Hooda, Defense Analysis Research Assistant, Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET), Location; Visiting Researcher, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), New Delhi, presented a paper on “How U.S.-India cooperation can be used to assure U.S. allies in East Asia” at the 2023 Fall Conference hosted by The Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) on 5 December 2023 at Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC.

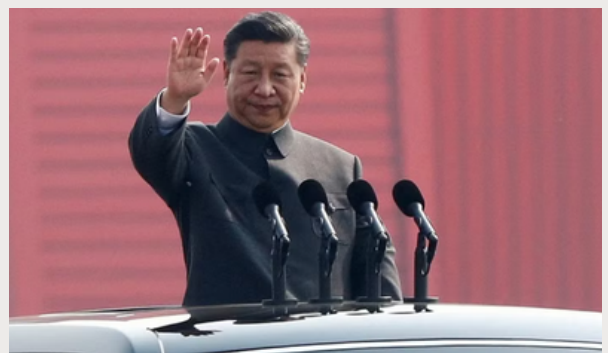
MEDIA UPDATE

JANUARY



Ananth P. Krishnan & Jabin T. Jacob on തായ്‌വാൻ രാഷ്ട്രപതി തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിന്റെ ദിശാസൂചിക (What Taiwan’s Election Results Portend).

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Jabin T. Jacob on **The Threats in Xi Jinping’s “Civilisational” Claims.**

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Jabin T. Jacob on **Taiwan Defies China through the Ballot. India must Bite the Bullet on its Security Concerns.**

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Jabin T. Jacob in podcast **“Understanding China”**.

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Kishan S. Rana on **Unfair Play: Where was Winston Churchill’s statesmanship when it came to India?**

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Samanvya Hooda & Husanjot Chahal on **Auditing AI: What is it and Why Does it Matter for India?**

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We look forward to your participation in our events and activities in the coming days and hope for your continued support. Please consider contributing to ICS. Click **here** to contribute.

COMING UP

2ND AICEAS

Theme: *East Asia in the Post-Pandemic Era :
Internal and External Dynamics*

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GARGI AND VP DUTT MEMORIAL LECTURE

Speaker: Barry Naughton, Chinese Economy Expert,
So Kwan Lok Professor, School of Global Policy and
Strategy, University of California, San Diego.

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