

A NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY AND O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP:

# **TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS RESHAPING GEOPOLITICS**

NEW DELHI WORKSHOP AGENDA

MARCH 17-18, 2026

## **Co-organizers:**

### **Dr. Mai'a K. Davis Cross**

Dean's Professor of Political Science, International Affairs, and Diplomacy  
Director of the Center for International Affairs & World Cultures  
Northeastern University

### **Dr. Sreeram Chaulia**

Professor and Dean, Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA)  
Director General, Jindal India Institute, O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)

### **Dr. Swasti Rao**

Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Global Initiatives  
O.P. Jindal Global University

*This workshop is supported by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York*

## *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

### **Workshop Description**

Transnational political networks – groups of individuals who transcend national boundaries to collectively champion shared policy goals – shape how international organizations and actors understand the world and determine future policy. Their success emerges from the social power of ideas gaining legitimacy across borders. These networks operate inside, outside, and across government structures and remain central to breakthroughs in cooperation.

This workshop examines how such networks, especially those led or influenced by Indian and Asian experts and institutions, can generate transformative global impact. Over two days, based on themes, each participant will offer opening remarks (5 minutes) followed by a two-part moderated roundtable discussion on:

**PART 1 (March 17):**

Why does this issue matter, and what do transnational networks hope to accomplish?

**PART 2 (March 18):**

In your view, what can be done to solve the challenge both locally and globally?

After the roundtables, there will be a closed brainstorming session in breakout groups according to themes. The aim is to generate five policy briefs around these themes, which will be published in the *Journal for Ethics in International Affairs*.

# *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

## **PART I**

**17 March 2026**

Location: Conference Room 2, India International Center, New Delhi

- 9:00 – 9:10 am      **Welcome and event introduction**, Professors Mai'a Cross and Sreeram Chaulia
- 9:10 – 9:20 am      **Carnegie Project Overview: Transnational Networks & the Future of Global Order**  
Professor Mai'a K. Davis Cross
- 9:20 – 10:25 am    **Roundtable Theme 1:  
Digital Public Infrastructure**  
Moderator: Prof. Swasti Rao  
  
Dr. Mansi Kedia  
*Digital Development Specialist, World Bank*  
  
Ramesh Kailasam  
*CEO, India Tech*  
  
Ayushi Sarna  
*AI Specialist, World Economic Forum*  
  
Subimal Bhattacharjee  
*Independent adviser/consultant on cyber security, defense & high-end technology*
- 10:25 – 11:25 am    **Roundtable Theme 2:  
Water as Foundational Commons: Climate-Technology-Security Networks**  
Moderator: Prof. Michael C. Davis  
  
Dr. Ilya Roubanis  
*Senior Non-Resident Fellow, Institute of International Relations (IDIS)*  
  
Uttam Sinha  
*Senior Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*  
  
Prof. Medha Bisht  
*Associate Professor, Dept. of International Relations, South Asian University*  
  
Judge Michael Wilson  
*JGU, Former Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court & Chair of the Department of Land and Natural Resources*
- 11:25 – 11:40 am    **Break**

## *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

11:40 am – 12:40 pm

### **Roundtable Theme 3: Track 1.5 Diplomacy & Conflict Resolution Networks**

Moderator: Prof. Mai'a K. Davis Cross

Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar  
*Former Ambassador*

Munira Mustaffa  
*Counter-terrorism Expert*

Prof. Vesselin Popovski  
*Vice Dean JGU Law School and Executive Director, Centre for the Study of United Nations*

Prof. Gudmundur Eiriksson  
*Former Ambassador, Executive Director, Centre for International Legal Studies*

12:40 – 1:30 pm

### **Lunch**

1:30 – 2:30 pm

### **Roundtable Theme 4: Regional Maritime Security Networks – Hybrid Threats**

Moderator: Dean and Prof. Sreeram Chaulia

Capt. (IN) Anurag Bisen (Retd.)  
*Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation*

Prof. Gitanjali Sinha Roy  
*Assistant Professor, O.P. Jindal Global University*

Dr. Rasik Ravindra  
*Chairman, Research Advisory Council, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa & Former Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India*

Dr. Pooja Bhatt  
*Associate Professor, Director, Pankaj Kumar Jha Centre for Security Studies JGU*

2:30 – 3:30 pm

### **Roundtable Theme 5: Transnational Networks for Critical Minerals**

Moderator: Matthew F. Fleming

Biplob Chatterjee  
*CEO & Director (Consulting), Geovale Services*

Anindita Sinh  
*Senior Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)*

Dr. Che-Jen Wang  
*Institute for National Defense and Security Research, Taiwan*

## *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

- 3:30 - 3:45 pm      **Break**
- 3:45 - 4:45 pm      **Brainstorming Session:**  
Breakout into small groups for discussion based on the theme:  
Beyond the challenge of your issue, what is the “spark” – the positive idea (power of possibility) that brings people together around the issue? What successes have been achieved so far by transnational networks in your issue? What strategies have worked?
- 5:00 pm              **Depart by Bus to Dinner Venue**
- 5:30-8:00 pm        **Dinner with Keynote Speaker, Dr. Shashi Tharoor at the Taj**  
See separate program for keynote event.

### **PART II**

**18 March 2026**

Location: “The Big Ideas Conference Room,” Sajjan Jindal Academic Block, Third Floor  
Jindal Global University, Sonipat

- 8:00 – 9:30 am      **Bus from Lodhi Hotel to JGU**
- 9:45 – 9:55 am      **Welcome and event introduction,** Mai’a Cross and Sreeram Chaulia
- 9:55 – 10:05 am    **Presentation:** “How Transnational Networks are Empowered to Make Cooperative Breakthroughs: Policy Lessons,”  
  
Professor Mai’a K. Davis Cross
- 10:05 – 10:50 am   **Roundtable Theme 1:**  
**Digital Public Infrastructure**  
  
Moderator: Prof. Swasti Rao (will briefly summarize Day 1 discussion)  
  
Dr. Mansi Kedia  
*Digital Development Specialist, World Bank*  
  
Rameesh Kailasam  
*CEO, India Tech*  
  
Ayushi Sarna  
*AI Specialist, World Economic Forum*  
  
Subimal Bhattacharjee  
*Independent adviser/consultant on cyber security, defense & high-end technology*

## *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

10:50 – 11:35 am

**Roundtable Theme 2:  
Water as Foundational Commons: Climate-Technology-Security Networks**

Moderator: Prof. Michael C. Davis (will briefly summarize day 1 discussion)

Dr. Ilya Roubanis  
*Senior Non-Resident Fellow, Institute of International Relations (IDIS)*

Uttam Sinha  
*Senior Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*

Prof. Medha Bisht  
*Associate Professor, Dept. of International Relations, South Asian University*

Judge Michael Wilson  
*JGU, Former Associate Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court & Chair of the Department of Land and Natural Resources*

11:35 – 11:45 am

**Break**

11:45 – 12:30 pm

**Roundtable Theme 4:  
Regional Maritime Security Networks – Hybrid Threats**

Moderator: Prof. Sreeram Chaulia (will briefly summarize day 1 discussion)

Capt. (IN) Anurag Bisen (Retd.)  
*Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation*

Prof. Gitanjali Sinha Roy  
*Assistant Professor, O.P. Jindal Global University*

Dr. Rasik Ravindra  
*Chairman, Research Advisory Council, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa & Former Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India*

Dr. Pooja Bhatt  
*Associate Professor, Director, Pankaj Kumar Jha Centre for Security Studies JGU*

12:30 – 1:30 pm

**Lunch**

1:30 – 2:15 pm

**Roundtable Theme 3  
Track 1.5 Diplomacy & Conflict Resolution Networks**

Moderator: Prof. Mai'a Cross (will briefly summarize day 1 discussion)

Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar  
*Former Ambassador*

## ***Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics***

Munira Mustaffa  
*Counter-terrorism Expert*

Prof. Vesselin Popovski  
*Vice Dean JGU Law School and Executive Director, Centre for the Study of United Nations*

Prof. Gudmundur Eiriksson  
*Former Ambassador, Executive Director, Centre for International Legal Studies*

2:15 – 3:00 pm

### **Roundtable Theme 5: Transnational Networks for Critical Minerals**

Moderator: Matthew F. Fleming (will briefly summarize day 1 discussion)

Biplob Chatterjee  
*CEO & Director (Consulting), Geovale Services*

Anindita Sinh  
*Senior Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)*

Dr. Che-Jen Wang  
*Institute for National Defense and Security Research, Taiwan*

3:00 – 3:15 pm

### **Break**

3:15 – 4:15 pm

### **Brainstorming Session:**

Breakout into small groups for discussion based on the theme:

Imagine it is a decade from now. What governance and infrastructure would be in place in your issue area in an ideal world? Next, discuss how we get from today to 2036. What can transnational networks do to get this breakthrough in regional or international cooperation?

4:15 – 4:30 pm

### **Wrap Up**

4:30 pm

### **Tour of Constitution Museum**

5:30 pm

### **Bus Back to Hotel and New Delhi**

# *Transnational Networks Reshaping Geopolitics*

## **Themes**

### **Theme 1: Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):**

A transnational community of practitioners is constructing open, interoperable digital public infrastructure that prioritizes public good over extractive digital monopolies. From Southeast Asia to Africa, policymakers and technologists are advancing shared principles: open architecture, democratic oversight, and secure cross-border data exchange. India's 'India Stack', along with innovations in privacy, digital identity, and governance models, is contributing to the emergence of a global 'DPI Commons.' The breakthrough potential lies in proving that digital sovereignty and international cooperation can reinforce each other, providing an alternative to Big Tech dependence or authoritarian digital ecosystems.

### **Theme 2: Water as Foundational Commons: Climate-Technology-Security Networks:**

Water systems have been designed with the assumption of relative abundance. However, the proliferation of data centers, urbanization, and population growth are creating an explosive mix across Eurasia that is testing the resilience of human security, environmental systems, and the economy. Agricultural systems still consume 70% of water supplies just as food insecurity is growing. With the melting of glaciers, human security and economies are likely to sustain massive shocks, particularly as scarcity accentuates kneejerk governance reactions that distribute all scarce resources on the basis of need but on the basis of social status and economic power. A transnational network of hydrologists, climate scientists, agricultural engineers, urban water managers, and technology industry sustainability officers are converging to address this civilizational challenge. This diverse network is united around the idea of integrated stewardship and the potential to make a breakthrough in international cooperation through promoting water as a shared public good rather than the subject of zero-sum allocation battles. The transnational distribution of water in an era of declining multilateralism poses an unprecedented challenge, which is already triggering ethnic conflict (Iran), mass population displacement (Indonesia, India, Bangladesh), and the potential for international conflict (Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, China, India). Can this emerging transnational network tap into the potential to cooperate on foundational resources, even amid geopolitical tension?

### **Theme 3: Track 1.5 Diplomacy & Conflict Resolution Networks:**

Track 1.5 diplomacy brings together former diplomats, retired military officials, and academic mediators who sustain dialogue when official channels break down. They provide discreet, trusted spaces for exploring compromises, crisis management ideas, and confidence-building measures. From India-Pakistan backchannels to Indo-Pacific maritime tensions, these networks preserve the continuity of communication that prevents escalation. The breakthrough potential lies in building standing crisis-prevention architectures, formalizing rapid-response mechanisms, and establishing protected diplomatic channels that operate irrespective of political fluctuations.

### **Theme 4: Regional Maritime Security Networks – Hybrid Threats:**

Maritime security professionals—including naval officers, coast guards, and civilian maritime administrators—collaborate across rivalries to maintain order in contested waters. Platforms such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) bring together nations that may otherwise struggle to cooperate diplomatically. The breakthrough potential lies in expanding beyond information exchange to coordinated maritime operations, integrating civilian maritime agencies, roping in private sector and non-governmental actors, and crafting rules of the road tailored to hybrid maritime threats such as piracy, illegal fishing, trafficking, and disaster response.

### **Theme 5: Transnational Networks for Critical Minerals:**

Critical mineral supply chains—spanning lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements, and copper—are deeply transnational, shaped by geopolitical competition, resource nationalism, and new alliances. Indian, African, Australian, and Latin American partners are crafting cooperative frameworks for responsible extraction, processing, and recycling. The breakthrough potential is the creation of multi-regional mineral corridors with participation of private sector and non-governmental actors that ensure energy transition security while embedding sustainability, transparency, and equitable value distribution.

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### **Workshop Co-Leaders**

**Mai'a K. Davis Cross** is the Dean's Professor of Political Science, International Affairs, and Diplomacy and Director of the Center for International Affairs and World Cultures at Northeastern University. She researches and writes about international cooperation, European security, transnational networks, and space policy. She is author or editor of nine books and special journal issues, including, *International Cooperation Against All Odds: The Ultrasocial World* (Oxford University Press, 2024), *Space Diplomacy* (Hague Journal of Diplomacy, 2023), *European-Russian Power Relations in Turbulent Times* (University of Michigan Press, 2021) and *The Politics of Crisis in Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Her forthcoming book is *The European Union's Grand Strategy: A Planetary-Scale Approach for Safeguarding the Future* (Oxford University Press). Her current research, "Transnational Political Networks and the Future of Global Order," is supported by a major grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York, which will result in more than 20 new case studies of how transnational networks foster breakthroughs in international cooperation. Professor Cross holds a PhD in Politics from Princeton University, and a bachelor's degree in Government from Harvard University. She is also a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has served on its Task Force on US Space Policy in 2024-5.

**Sreeram Chaulia** is Professor and Dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs, and Director General of the Jindal India Institute of O.P. Jindal Global University, in Sonapat, India. He is a leading opinion columnist for Dainik Jagran (Hindi) and Hindustan Times (English) on world affairs and a commentator on international current issues on radio and television. He anchors the 'Indian Diplomacy' TV show on India's national broadcaster Doordarshan. He is a contributing editor for 'People Who Influenced the World' (Murray Books, 2005), and has authored 'International Organizations and Civilian Protection: Power, Ideas and Humanitarian Aid in Conflict Zones' (I.B. Tauris, 2011), 'Politics of the Global Economic Crisis: Regulation, Responsibility and Radicalism' (Routledge, 2013), 'Modi Doctrine: The Foreign Policy of India's Prime Minister' (Bloomsbury, 2016), 'Trumped: Emerging Powers in a Post-American World' (Bloomsbury, 2019) and 'Crunch Time: Narendra Modi's National Security Crises' (Rupa, 2022). His latest book, FRIENDS: INDIA'S CLOSEST STRATEGIC PARTNERS, has just been published by Rupa in 2024. He tweets on global developments@[sreeramchaulia](https://twitter.com/sreeramchaulia).

**Swasti Rao** is a geopolitical expert Commentator and Author. She is currently Non-Resident Fellow at Eastern Circles, Paris and a Contributor to The Print. She has worked at the prestigious Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), India's premier think tank under the aegis of Ministry of Defence. At MP-IDSA, Swasti had worked on projects for Ministry for External Affairs and Ministry of Defence on European geopolitics and geo-economics. Her research project at MP-IDSA has been on Conflicts in Europe amidst Shifting Power Structures and Europe's Indo Pacific outreach. Recognized as a "Geopolitical Expert" by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, India, for the G20 Summit in 2023, Dr. Rao was also honored as one of the under-40 Young Leaders by EICBI for substantiating India-Europe relations. She is affiliated with the EU-India Women's Council and serves as a reviewer for the peer reviewed publications by National Maritime Foundation (NMF), India, and Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London. She is also a geopolitical advisor to the Uttar Pradesh Government on developing the "UP Defence Industrial Corridor" a key undertaking of the Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India. An alumnus of JNU, India; Tsukuba University, Japan and Institut des hautes études de défense nationale (IHEDN), France; she is a recipient of the prestigious Japanese Education Ministry Fellowship (MEXT) in 2011 and the 'Okita Memorial Scholarship' in 2010 from ICCR. She qualified the University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test in International and Area Studies in 2007. She has held an adjunct position at the Tokai University, Japan in the capacity of a foreign collaborator for the Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS). She is a widely published author. Her latest publications are with Routledge, World Scientific Publishers, Palgrave Macmillan and Pentagon Press. Her work on the Ukraine war is soon to be compiled in a book, 'Ukraine Untold' by Harper Collins, India.

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### **Moderators**

**Michael C. Davis** is a Professor of Law and International Affairs at O.P Jindal Global University. He is also research associate at both the Weatherhead East Asia Institute at Columbia University and at the US-Asia Law Institute at NYU. Professor Davis has held endowed visiting professorships at Notre Dame and Northwestern universities and senior fellowships at Yale and Harvard law schools, as well as the Wilson Center and the National Endowment for Democracy. His scholarship has engaged human rights and constitutional development issues across the Asian region. Long a public intellectual in Hong Kong, he was a professor in the Law Faculty at the University of Hong Kong until late 2020. His most recent book, *Freedom Undone, The Assault on Liberal Values and Institutions in Hong Kong* (Columbia University Press, 2024) elaborates the Hong Kong experience under Beijing's authoritarian rule. Beyond academic writing, his commentary has appeared in such popular media as the New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Nikkei, the Journal of Democracy, Politics and Rights Review, and the South China Morning Post. His series of commentary in the latter on the 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong won him the 2015 Human Rights Press Award for Commentary awarded by Amnesty International and other affiliates. As a public intellectual he has also been a frequent contributor to various media broadcasts and podcasts.

**Matthew F. Fleming** is a Non-Resident James A. Kelly Korea Fellow at the Pacific Forum and a Ph.D. student in political science at Northeastern University. His research focuses on Indo-Pacific security, minilateralism, and strategic competition in Northeast Asia, with particular attention to U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateralism, Indo-Pacific strategies, and U.S. foreign relations with South Korea and Japan. He is also a Graduate Fellow at Northeastern's Center for International Affairs and World Cultures and previously served as a U.S. Delegate to the U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Global Leadership Youth Summit, a U.S. Department of State initiative in 2024. He has held positions with the Indo-Pacific Strategy Team in the Office of Regional and Security Policy at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP/RSP), the East Asia Institute, and the Yonsei Institute for North Korean Studies' journals. Fleming holds an M.A. in Global Affairs and Policy from Yonsei University (Korea), specializing in international security and foreign policy, and an M.A. in Media and Governance from Keio University (Japan), focusing on global governance and regional strategy. His writing on Indo-Pacific security and minilateral cooperation has appeared in The Diplomat, Pacific Forum, the CDA Institute, the East-West Center, North Korean Review, and the Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies.

### **Keynote Speaker**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor**, is a fourth-term Member of Parliament, representing the parliamentary constituency of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in the Lok Sabha. A proud member of the Indian National Congress (INC), he has served as a Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Human Resource Development in the Government of India during the second term of the United Progressive Alliance. At present the chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, he has previously chaired the Parliamentary Standing Committees on External Affairs (2014-19), Information Technology (2019-21) and Chemicals & Fertilizers (2021-24). Before joining Indian politics, Dr. Tharoor worked for nearly three-decades at the United Nations, serving as a peacekeeper, refugee worker and administrator at the highest levels, including as Under-Secretary-General during Mr. Kofi Annan's tenure as Secretary General. In 2006, the Dr. Manmohan Singh-led Government of India nominated him for the Secretary Generalship of the United Nations; in the contest that followed, Dr. Tharoor emerged a strong second to South Korea's Ban Ki-moon. Dr. Tharoor is also an award-winning, internationally-bestselling author of over twenty-five books, of both fiction and non-fiction. He has won a score of prestigious literary honours, including the Commonwealth Writer's Prize, the Crossword Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Sahitya Akademi Award — India's second-highest literary prize — in the category of "English Non-Fiction" for *An Era of Darkness*, his magisterial indictment of the British Raj. Dr. Tharoor has spent the greatest part of his literary and public life articulating, defending, and championing the Idea of India, anchored in our Constitution, that the INC embodies. In 2022, he ran for President of the All India Congress Committee. At present, he is a full-time member of the Congress Working Committee.

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### **Participants**

**Pooja Bhatt** is Associate Professor and received her doctoral degree from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in 2021. She holds an M.A. in International Relations and an MPhil in Diplomacy and Disarmament from JNU. She also holds a diploma in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) from Yeosu Academy, Korea Maritime Institute. She is also the author of the book titled *Nine-Dash Line: Deciphering the South China Sea Conundrum* (Republished by Routledge June 2024; Knowledge World 2020). Pooja was a part of the prestigious Indian Navy History book *A Decade of Transformation: The Indian Navy 2011-21* released by the Hon'ble President of India on Navy Day 2022. She is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi. Besides working extensively on maritime issues, particularly the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea, she writes about issues related to defence and Asian security architecture. Her work has been published in the US Naval War College's prestigious journal, *International Law Quarterly*, and *Journal for Indo-Pacific Affairs, USA*. She has published several chapters in edited volumes and articles on reputed web platforms such as Lowy Institute, Pacific Forum, PerthUSAsia, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Sweden and so on. Her two recent papers on submarine cable protection were published by a DFAT Australia-funded project at the Australia-India Institute, and another co-authored one at the Institute for Security & Development Policy, Sweden. Previously, she worked as a Consultant with the Policy Planning & Research division at the Ministry of External Affairs, India.

**Capt. (IN) Anurag Bisen (Retd.)** is a veteran submariner of the Indian Navy with over 35 years of service, including the command of Sindhughosh (Kilo) Class missile submarine. Captain Bisen tenanted an 8-year tenure in the National Security Council Secretariat where as a Senior Defence Specialist he worked on a range of maritime subjects including maritime boundary and international maritime law matters, Indo-Pacific, Indian Ocean Region, Maritime and Coastal Security and Polar Issues. He was instrumental in drafting and coordinating the approval process of India's Arctic Policy, released by the Government in March 2022. Captain Anurag Bisen is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College Wellington, holding master's degrees in Defence & Strategic Studies and Telecommunication & Electronic Warfare. He is also a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and a diploma in Russian Language from Arkhangelsk State University, Russia. Captain Bisen has also qualified UGC-NET in Defence & Strategic Studies and is currently pursuing his PhD in National Security Studies from Jawaharlal University, New Delhi. Anurag has been nominated as a permanent expert on the panel of the International Expert Group of the Lomonosov Moscow State University Marine Research Centre, Russia. He is also Honorary Adjunct Faculty at the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi. Before joining VIF as a Senior Fellow, Captain Bisen was a Research Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

**Dr. Medha Bisht** is Associate Professor (SG) of International Relations at South Asian University, specializing in transboundary water governance, diplomacy, and climate policy. She combines consultancy experience with UN agencies (UNIFEM, UNDP), international /hybrid organisations (IUCN, OXFAM), and bilateral programs (DFID/Asia Foundation), and training skills (UNECE, ICIMOD) with scholarly publications in leading journals including *Global Studies Quarterly*, *International Studies*, *Water Policy*, *Water Alternatives*, *Strategic Analysis*, *Journal of Indian Ocean Region* and the *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*. Author of "*Kautilya's Arthashastra: Philosophy of Strategy*" (Routledge, 2020), Dr Bisht has also lectured at India's Foreign Service Institute to international diplomats, bringing both theoretical depth and practical diplomatic insights to complex water governance challenges. She has led and contributed to international collaborative projects on water diplomacy across South Asia, Europe, and North America while serving on regional working groups for transboundary river management and climate adaptation.

**Biplob Chatterjee** is a senior geoscientist and strategic advisor with over 42 years of experience in the global minerals industry. As the CEO of Geovale Services, he oversees a multidisciplinary consultancy specializing in the full-spectrum development of critical mineral assets - from Greenfield exploration and resource modeling to downstream beneficiation and financial feasibility. A deep technical focus on the upstream value chain characterizes his professional career. Over 15 years in consulting, preceded by 16 years with Rio Tinto

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Exploration and 11 years with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and ONGC, Mr. Chatterjee has developed a global footprint, leading more than 600 projects across 40 countries. His technical leadership played a crucial role in the discovery of the Bunder diamond pipe in Madhya Pradesh - India, a landmark in primary diamond exploration. In 2025, Mr. Chatterjee's work will be pivotal in addressing global supply chain vulnerabilities for transition metals. He led five distinct exploration programs in India that resulted in the identification of new mineral districts for Rare Earth Elements (REE), Copper, Gold, and Graphite. Simultaneously, his leadership in five African projects led to the discovery of significant Lithium, Titanium, and Vanadium deposits. Beyond the field, Mr. Chatterjee is a contributor to the discourse on mineral economics. His recent downstream studies have provided the technical de-risking necessary to facilitate over \$1 billion USD in capital investment for mineral development projects. He is a recipient of the National Mineral (Geoscience) Award (1996), awarded for his pioneering work in the discovery of primary diamond deposits in Chhattisgarh in Central India. His current focus remains on the strategic optimization of the mineral value chain to support the global energy transition.

**Prof. Gudmundur Eiriksson** is since 2014 Professor, O.P. Jindal Global Law School, and Senior Fellow, Centre for International Legal Studies. He is the President of the Arbitral Tribunal in the Dispute concerning the Detention of Ukrainian Naval Vessels and Servicemen (Ukraine v. the Russian Federation) which is being conducted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. He is a Judge ad hoc in the M/T "Heroic Idun" Case (No.2) (Marshall Islands/Equatorial Guinea) before a Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Rutgers College in 1970, an LL.B. (Honours) degree from King's College London in 1973 and an LL.M. degree from Columbia University in 1974. He is a Fellow of King's College London and Professor Emeritus of the University for Peace. Professor Eiriksson served as a Law of the Sea Officer in the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Law of the Sea from 1974 to 1976 and as a Special Consultant at the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1977. He was Director of International Law and Human Rights Studies and Dean for Cooperative Programmes at the University for Peace from 2001 to 2003 and Professor and Head of the Department of International Law and Human Rights from 2005 to 2008. He joined the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland in 1977, with the rank of Ambassador from 1988, and served as Assistant Legal Adviser (1977–1980), Legal Adviser (1980–1996) and Ambassador to Canada, Nicaragua, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru (2003–2005), South Africa (2008–2014, resident in Pretoria 2008–2009 and in New Delhi 2009–2014), India (2009–2014), Singapore (2010–2014), Nepal (2011–2014), Malaysia (2012–2014) and Bangladesh (2013–2014). Professor Eiriksson was a Judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea from 1996 to 2002 and a member of the United Nations International Law Commission from 1987 to 1996.

**Dr. Mansi Kedia** is a Digital Development Specialist at The World Bank Group and was a Senior Fellow at ICRIER (August 2029-June 20205) with over thirteen years of experience in public policy. Her research focuses on issues of the digital economy including governance of the internet, emerging technology, competition and digital public infrastructure. She is currently a member of the CII National Committee on Telecom and Broadband. She was Co-Chair of the T20 Task Force on Our Common Digital Future: Affordable, Accessible and Inclusive Digital Public Infrastructure (2023), a Mid-Career Fellow of ISOC (2022) and member of the Direct Tax Committee (2017). She earned her B.Sc. Economics from St. Xavier's, Kolkata, MBA from ISB, Hyderabad and PhD from IIFT, New Delhi.

**Rameesh Kailasam** is the President and CEO of IndiaTech.org an industry body and think-tank set up by Founders and Investors from the Indian Start-up ecosystem to enable strategic direction and ease of doing business through key government policies. Rameesh has over 28 years of experience in governance and policy reforms and is experienced in strategy formulation, leadership building, market entry, competitiveness, building businesses, coalitions, policy advocacy, crisis management and market creation. He has worked with the likes of AtosKPMG, Centre for Good Governance, Oracle, Applied Materials, IBM and APCO Worldwide. He has authored over 300+ papers and policy recommendations that have been implemented by various governments across the world. His expertise lies in having worked in over 40 plus sectors and reforms in areas such as

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Finance, Health, Education, Government and Business Administration, e-Governance, Municipal reforms to emerging technologies, consumer internet, livelihoods, and the creator economy. He was conferred the “Young Achiever” and “Distinguished Achiever” Awards by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) under Ministry of Corporate Affairs. He has been acknowledged for his contributions by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam in his book “Manifesto for Change”. He is a regular columnist in various newspapers and media and is a regular on policy talk shows on television and internet mediums. Rameesh is a Fellow Cost and Management Accountant and holds multiple qualifications in Accounting, Finance, Technology, as well as policy and e-governance. He also serves as an Independent Director on the board of NCC, a listed company.

**Munira Mustaffa** is Executive Director of Chasseur Group and Senior Fellow at Verve Research, specialising in emerging security challenges across political violence, irregular warfare, and grey zone operations. A former analyst with Malaysia's Defence Intelligence Organisation and SEARCCT, she holds an MSc in Countering Organised Crime and Terrorism from University College London and is an incoming PhD candidate in War Studies at King's College London. Her work spans from transnational threat analysis to strategic vulnerabilities. She is also an Affiliate Member of the AVERT Research Network and previously held fellowships at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in The Hague and the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy in Washington, DC. Her analyses have been published by NATO StratCom COE, GNET, ASPI, and the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. She regularly briefs senior government and military stakeholders and has provided expert analysis to news outlets such as Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post and Al Jazeera.

**Dr. Vesselin Popovski** is Professor and Vice Dean of the Jindal Global Law School, ranked by the QS in the top 75 in the world. Founding Director of the Centre for the Study of United Nations, Senior Advisor of the International Institute for Higher Education and Research, Council Member of the Office for Inter-Disciplinary Studies (IDEAS) at O.P. Jindal Global University, India. Co-chair of the 2026 Annual Meeting and Chair of the ‘Best PhD Dissertation Award’ Committee of the Academic Council of the UN System (ACUNS). Member of the Editorial Board of the Journal ‘Asian International Studies Review’, of the Advisory Boards of the Global Institute for Strategic Research (Qatar); Brill ‘Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies’ and the ‘Polish Law Review’. Currently Director of the Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan, Visiting Professor at Sophia University, Japan; University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland; ‘Kliment Ohridski’ University in Bulgaria; and (previously) Yokohama City University, Japan. In 2004-2014 Senior Academic Officer at UN University in Tokyo. In 2002-2004 co-directed the EU Project ‘Legal Protection of Individual Rights in Russia’. In 1999-2002 Lecturer at the University of Exeter in the UK. Prior to that Bulgarian diplomat serving in Sofia, New York and London. Academic degrees: Ph.D. (King’s College London); M.Sc. (London School of Economics); B.A./M.A. (Moscow Institute of International Affairs). Published 25 books and numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals. Over ten thousand citations in academic literature. Co-author of the “The Second Charter”, article-by-article revision of the current UN Charter. In 2000-2001 took part in two significant international projects: ‘The Responsibility to Protect’ of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty; and the ‘Princeton Principles of Universal Jurisdiction’.

**Dr. Rasik Ravindra** held the position of the Director of NCAOR between January 2006 and August 2012 after relinquishing the post of Deputy Director General in Geological Survey of India, an organization that he served from 1971 to 2005. A veteran Antarctic, he participated in Indian Expedition to Antarctica in 1987-88 for the first time and subsequently led Ninth Antarctic Expedition in 1989-91, visiting the icy continent again in 1996-97, 2003-04, 2007 and 2009 in various capacities for specific assignments, contributing to different facets of Antarctic science, logistics and policy of this mission. In 2010, he led the First Indian Expedition to South Pole that saw an eight member team of scientists on South Pole, opening new grounds for research by Indian

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scientists in the deep interior areas of Antarctica. He was Leader of the Environmental Task Force in XVI Expedition. He led the Team constituted for selecting the site of the third Indian Station in XXIII Expedition and led the First Indian Arctic Expedition in 2008, that led to establishment of Bharati and Himadri in Antarctic and Arctic, respectively. He was Chairman of the DST constituted Program Monitoring Committee on “Dynamics of Himalayan Glaciers from 2007 to 2012 and was appointed Chair, Panikkar Professor in October 2012 by Ministry of Earth Sciences. He has been elected to the UN Commission on Limits of Continental Shelf for 2014-2017 Term. He has held the prestigious positions of Vice President of SCAR during 2008-2012, Vice Chair of COMNAP (2008-2011), Chairman of the Asian Forum on Polar Sciences (2010-1012), First Council Member from India to International Arctic Science Committee and the Chair of INSA-SCAR National Committee for 2008- 12 and 2012-15. He has received National Award for Polar Sciences and Cryosphere, 2013, National Mineral Award-1990, Antarctic Award-2002, H.N. Siddiqui Gold Medal from IGU in 2011, Prof Prem Bahadur Verma Memorial Lecture and Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award-2011.

**Dr. Ilya Roubanis** (PhD, EUI Florence) is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Relations Institute in Athens and a member of the editorial team at Caucasus Watch in Germany. He works as a freelance investigative reporter and business intelligence analyst, specialising in strategic studies, political economy, and comparative politics, with a regional focus on the Caucasus and the Levant. Based in the UK, his recent work includes a series of interviews and analytical briefs on the diplomatic framing of water-resource management, examining how states negotiate scarcity, interdependence, and shared-basin governance. This complements his broader research on institutional design, cross-border cooperation, and the political incentives that shape collective-action outcomes in plurilateral settings that are resistant to multilateral commitments. In parallel, he advises private-sector clients on supply-chain disruption and geopolitical risk, drawing on extensive fieldwork and multi-jurisdictional experience.

**Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar** has worked for the Indian Foreign Service for over three decades. He was the ambassador of India to Kazakhstan Sweden and Latvia and has worked in diplomatic positions in Washington DC Brussels Moscow Geneva Tehran Dhaka and Bangkok. He negotiated for India in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations for India-EU India-ASEAN and the India-Thailand Free Trade Agreement. He has worked as the head of National Foundation for Communal Harmony. He is currently the president of Institute of Global Studies in New Delhi. Amb. Sajjanhar writes and speaks on issues relating to international relations and Indian foreign policy.

**Ayushi Sarna** is a Specialist in AI and Data Policy at C4IR India, World Economic Forum India Liaison Office. There she leads strategic workstreams on AI adoption, governance, and responsible innovation. Her work focuses on translating emerging technologies into scalable, real-world applications—particularly for MSMEs—digital public infrastructure frameworks. With a background in economics, public policy, and technology regulation, Ayushi brings a cross-sector perspective. She previously worked with the UK’s online safety regulator, where she engaged with complex questions at the intersection of platform governance, risk regulation, and digital policy. Prior to that, she worked with a boutique consultancy in Paris, where she undertook socio-economic analyses of public sector policies and projects. Her experience spans research, stakeholder consultation, regulatory analysis, and ecosystem building. At C4IR India, she leads the development of AI playbooks and adoption frameworks for small and medium enterprises, working closely with industry bodies, ministries, and multilateral partners. Her interests include the economics of emerging technologies, data governance in digital public infrastructure, and building institutional capacity for responsible AI in developing economies. Ayushi is particularly interested in bridging policy and implementation—ensuring that AI strategies move beyond principles into practical tools that enable innovation, competitiveness, and inclusive growth.

**Anindita Singh** is a Research Associate in the Foreign Policy and Security Studies team, where she works on India’s minerals diplomacy and climate cooperation. She holds a Master’s degree in International Relations and Area Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and a B.A. (Hons.) in Liberal Arts from Symbiosis International University, Pune. She previously interned with CSEP and the United Service Institution of India.

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**Dr. Gitanjali Sinha Roy** is an Assistant Professor of International Relations, Indo-Pacific Studies and Japanese Studies at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University. She is the Director of the Pankaj Kumar Jha Centre for Security Studies. Dr. Sinha Roy is also the Assistant Dean of Admissions for the Jindal School of International Affairs. Previously, Dr. Gitanjali Sinha Roy was a Research Assistant at the United Service Institution of India, New Delhi, India. She was also a Research Associate at the Centre for Strategy and Security Studies (CESCUBE) and apart from that, she is a Fellow at the Japan Division at CESCUBE(honorary). Gitanjali was also the Coordinator(honorary) at the MOSAI, MEXT Indo Group where she handles projects on India-Japan relations with a special focus on language and culture. Previously, she worked with the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, India as a research assistant. Previously, she was a visiting Monbukagakusho (MEXT) Fellow at the University of Tokyo. She was also a researcher at the University of Tokyo and worked on strengthening India-Japan Relations. Gitanjali has extensively written in books, journals, and websites and has been a guest speaker for many Japan-related forums. Her interest areas comprise India and Japan's Foreign Policy, Security Strategy and Diplomacy, India-Japan Relations: Maritime Security and Strategy in the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asian and Security Strategy and Diplomacy.

**Uttam Sinha** is a leading scholar and commentator on transboundary rivers, climate change and the Arctic. He was Co-Chair of the Think-20 Task Force on 'Accelerating SDGs: Exploring New Pathways to the 2030 Agenda' during India's G20 Presidency. After a brief stint in the print media and a doctoral degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, he joined the MP-IDSA in 2001, where he coordinates the Non-Traditional Security Centre and is the Managing Editor of Strategic Analysis published by Routledge, the institute's flagship journal. He is a recipient of many fellowships and leadership programmes including senior fellow at the Prime Ministers Museum and Library (2018-2020); Academic Visitor at the Harvard Kennedy School (2015); Chevening 'Gurukul' leadership at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2008) and a visiting fellow at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (2006). His recently published work is Trial By Water: Indus Basin and India-Pakistan Relations(Penguin 2025); BBIN Sub-Region: Perspectives on Climate-water-Energy Nexus(Pentagon Press, 2023), Indus Basin Interrupted: A History of Territory and Politics from Alexander to Nehru (Penguin, 2021). His other works include the Riverine Neighbourhood: Hydro-politics in South Asia (Pentagon Press, 2016) and Climate Change Narratives: Reading the Arctic (2014). His edited and co-edited volumes include Modi: Energising a Green Future (Pentagon, 2023); Modi: Shaping a Global Order in Flux (Wisdom Tree, 2023); MODI 2.0: A Resolve To Secure India (Pentagon Press, 2021); The Modi Doctrine: New Paradigms in India's Foreign Policy (Wisdom Tree, 2016); Non-Traditional Security Challenges in Asia: Approaches and Responses (Routledge, 2015); Arctic: Commerce, Governance and Policy (Routledge, 2015) and Emerging Strategic Trends in Asia (Pentagon Press, 2015).

**Dr. Che-Jen Wang** is an Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute of National Defense and Security Research (INDSR) in Taiwan. He holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Economics at the Russian Academy of Sciences. With a focus on the US-China tech competition, Dr. Wang specializes in the geopolitics of semiconductors and rare earth elements, analyzing how critical mineral supply chains impact national security. Leveraging his fluency in Russian and Mandarin, his research offers unique insights into the strategic competition between major powers.

**Michael Wilson** was appointed to the Hawaii Supreme Court on April 17, 2014, after serving as a Circuit Court Judge of the First Circuit since May 10, 2000. As a Circuit Court Judge, he presided over adult drug court, adult mental health court and the felony criminal trial court. Justice Wilson is a founding member of the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment and an adjunct faculty member of the Jindal Global University Law School in Sonapat, India. Prior to his appointment as a Circuit Court judge, Justice Wilson was the director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Chair of the State Water Commission and a Trustee of the Kahoolawe Island Reserve Commission. He was awarded a lifetime membership in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies in 1999. Previously, he was a partner in the law firms of Pavey Wilson & Glickstein and Hart Wolff & Wilson where he practiced civil and

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criminal trial and appellate law. Justice Wilson received his law degree from Antioch School of Law in Washington D.C., and bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.