

ANNUAL

REPORT



2025-26



The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies

Annual Report

2025-2026



**THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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DIRECTOR'S DESK

Introduction

In reference to the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies' journey which keeps manifesting an interesting canvas of events, engagements extrapolate various ideas surrounding national and international interests. Institute in precision could be defined as a fulcrum connecting people and policy dynamics. ISCS as people's forum and from the point of research outlook remains evaluative foraying on pragmatic discussions undertaken for national interest. Projecting and bringing less talked about forces to center stage that continues to stimulate its growth at one end at one edge cut shots its progress through unprecedented world orders, market rearrangements defining arrogance of world powers and customized social issues at regional levels threatening homogeneity and dividing society into multiple groupings.

If anybody asked about the institute's journey at present, the best answer would be relating it to an adolescent mind that preserves curiosity, restlessness till objectives etched, enhancing skills and skimming through opportunities through which it can personify its identity in a best possible way.

In terms of its work dynamics Institute as a body recognized by ICSSR, The Ministry of Education, GoI continued to comply its virtues of redefining the indomitable spree of the Indian Constitution that not only stand erect and unchanged over last 75 years but also continues to deliberate equality in terms of choices, effectiveness of the essence of traditional knowledge system and lastly asserting efficiency in reciprocating to technological advancement to be at par with other developed nations. Institute's research project that acts as a functional source of a factual interpretation of how

the constitutional compact sustaining fort 75 years, defining policies, inter-organizational interchanges at both vertical and horizontal level have been life changing for communities across Himalayan regions who due to territorial, political and external forces faced challenges and resistance in more ways than one.

Institute's center of study on Indian Ocean Resource Center (IORC) through its academic exercise reassessed the role of Arikamedu which has an enduring linkage and relevance to India's maritime heritage and regional history remains important node for ocean trade network facilitating cultural, commercial, and transoceanic interactions.

The Purvodaya Lit Fest second edition remained more engaging than the previous year with a massive footfall of younger generations who learned, interacted, participated in multiple competitions and expressed their ideas about being a part of the fest at Gyan Vriksha. Purvodaya Lit fest in its second edition with started with a very captivating address by then Hon'ble Governor, H.E. C. V. Ananada Bose who described how the fest remains conceding in bridging the gap between the readers and writers, defining the rich literary heritage of Eastern India and also narrating a paradigm shift in dissemination of knowledge with advanced electronic platforms. Where words instead of books are beamed through screens swiftly enabling a squad of words to touch clique of minds. The presentation of the Literary Excellence Award to Dr. Paramita Satapathy representing Odisha in juxtapose to amalgamation of versatile writers from other seven parts of Eastern India redefined the glory of Purvodaya Lit Fest as Eastern India largest literary festival adjudicating the concept of many languages One Literature.

Institute's chapter on Bangladesh Studies remains extremely keen to address the ongoing social, political and economic aspects of its neighbouring Bangladesh. Which after a turmoil of long 18 months very recently faced its 13th Parliamentary General Elections. Thus a range of discussion at the country's capital and Kolkata tried to subsume on how the country aims to resynthesize its relation with India, rehabilitate equality and fill in the economic and social void through trade partnerships, security perspectives also safeguarding interests of minorities. Prioritizing suffixes like less violence and more equity in case of human rights and gender sensitization.

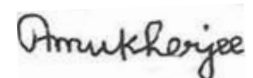
The vestibule of ideas and narratives that opened up through writings by people at ISCS's newly launched digital platform "Outlook" and chapter on Neighbourhood Studies that estimated the implications of the elections amongst three neighbours of India have gone through a cataclysmic change led by violent movement in the case of Bangladesh (August, 2024) and Nepal (September, 2025) and a military coup in Myanmar (February, 2021). The other Chapters, discourses and events remained pertinent towards narrating demographical, strategically, structural changes in Asian frameworks, India's standpoints and approaches ensuring a balance between benefactor and beneficiary with respect to national, international and regional changing metaphors.

Like research and events, the Institute's publication division also remains diversified, attempting to blend history and contemporary, sharing ideas and works of national reformers that till date remains vital for the country amending homogeneity and oppressing monolithic colonial barriers. Though this year Institute's Publication on Operation Sindoor did steal the show that narrated country's determination to Zero Tolerance towards Terrorism and role of indomitable Indian Air Force (IAF). IAF played a crucial role in delivering precision strikes against

terror infrastructure across Pakistan. In parallel to the mainstream publication the regular takes at the national and international frontiers have been essays by Institute's NewsReel that turned seventh, Purvodaya mapping the happenings of East turning 5th year. All these publications as an "intellectual gym"—continues to cross pollinate ideas cultivating the intellectual depth decoding ideas about the global reality shifts.

So that Institute's ideas penetrates cross sectionally across national and international terrain it continued its participation at the different Book Fairs including the Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany at the international level and Indian level including the Kolkata Book Fair, The Andaman Book Fair 2025. In order to provide training and learning and experiences about the bunch of operations and management techniques undertaken by research forum cycle- including nurturing ideas undertaking threshold of actions and triggering reactions. Institute continues to undertake an Internship programme where students from eminent academic institutes participate to take back a gamut of experience consisting of lectures, one to one interaction with diplomat, and interesting group assignments. That not only helps them to catapult their academic endeavor but remains relevant towards their personality tunings.

The activity filled year once again aims to start on a fresh slate stringing unique ideas, up roaring about its zeal for better tomorrow and conferring with intentions and objectives acting as a spin wheel changing geographies and trends of global politics. Thus the proposition would be that 2026-2027 for a Think Tank like ISCS would be making a collaborative attempt to examine not just what the world is becoming, but how India is reading, responding to, and shaping it. The aim is to move beyond commentary and towards clarity to bridge reflections and actions, and to strengthen the connection between ideas, institutions, and influence.



Prof. Arindam Mukherjee,
Director, ISCS, India

FREEDOM STRUGGLE STUDIES



National Seminar on 75 Years of Indian Republic: Milestones, Challenges, and Future Horizon 12th September, 2025 | Bhumika Hall, Auroville, Tamil Nadu



To commemorate this historic event, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata, The Auroville Foundation and Sri Aurobindo Centre For Advanced Research (SACAR) hosted a prestigious one-day national seminar titled “75 Years of Indian Republic: Milestones, Challenges, and Future Horizon” on 12th September, 2025, at Bhumika Hall, Auroville,

The 75th anniversary of Indian Republic marks a momentous milestone in the nation’s democratic journey. This historic occasion reflects the resilience, unity, and progress of a nation that transformed its vision of sovereignty, justice, liberty, and equality into reality. Over the past 75 years, the Republic has witnessed remarkable achievements in governance, science, technology, arts, and social empowerment, while staying rooted in its core civilizational values. Commemorating this jubilee year is not only a tribute to the architects of the Constitution but also an opportunity for every citizen to reaffirm their commitment to the ideals of democracy, nation-building, and inclusive growth that define India’s identity today.

Tamil Nadu. The seminar provided a comprehensive platform for scholars, policymakers and students through dialogue and scholarly analysis to evaluate and introspect the remarkable journey of Indian democracy, assess ongoing challenges, and envision the future trajectory of the nation.

The Inaugural Session of the seminar had the presence of H.E. R. N. Ravi, Hon’ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Jayanti Ravi IAS, Secretary, Auroville Foundation, Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS , Dr. Anirban Ganguly, Chairman & Trustee, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation (SPMRF).

The program commenced with a welcome address delivered by Shri Arindam Mukherjee, who, in his



(L-R) Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Dr. Jayanti Ravi. H.E. R. N. Ravi, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Anirban Ganguly

remarks, expressed gratitude to the distinguished audience and emphasized the purpose and significance of the seminar.

Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, in his address on this

occasion, emphasized the importance of reflecting on India's rich history, which embodies the tradition of collective governance.

The next speaker, the guest of honour at this seminar,



H.E. R. N. Ravi, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu addressing the seminar

Srimati Jayanti Ravi in her deliberation recalled Sri Aurobindo's historic broadcast at All India Radio, Tiruchirapalli, on the eve of Indian independence which outlined his five dreams that included free and united India, the resurgence of Asia, a world union, the spiritual gift of India to the world and a higher step in evolution.

The Hon'ble governor, in his address, urged citizens to introspect on both the accomplishments and the challenges faced by the country over the past 75 years. He acknowledged the Union government's welfare initiatives that have contributed to enhancing housing, healthcare, and essential services for the underprivileged. Furthermore, he emphasized the significance of unity and diversity that give India



Shri Biswajit Ganguly



Prof. Arindam Mukherjee

its strength. He remarked that the trajectory of the Republic will be shaped by the choices made by the citizens of India today. He expressed a desire that Indians should continue to look at India (Bharat) as a family, a rastra.

In his keynote address, Dr. Anirban Ganguly discussed the significant milestone achieved by the Indian Republic through the implementation of the national language policy, the abolition of Article 370, which has contributed to a more unified nation, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. In his deliberation, he emphasized the deep-rooted democratic tradition that existed in India since the ancient times. He urged the citizens of India to move

beyond the mindset of a rights-based democracy and evolve into a democracy of duties. In his address the speaker examined the challenges faced by Indian Republic in light of the 11 resolutions presented by Shri Narendra Modi in 2024.

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Shri Biswajit Ganguly where he expressed his appreciation to the esteemed guests present on the dais. He conveyed his gratitude for being part of a seminar that he regarded as a melting pot of diverse thoughts and opinions. He said that while democracy remains the cornerstone of India's freedom struggle, he believed that during the seminar, the idea of constitution as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and its principles being adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India should be introspected from a pragmatic angle. He offered his greetings to all the speakers of the daylong seminar who would enlighten the audience with their deliberations.

The first Academic Session "Milestones in Indian Democracy" chaired by honourable former Justice of Calcutta High Court, Shri Sambuddha Chakrabarti, hosted a panel of erudite speakers such as Dr. V. Ananda Reddy, Founder and Director of Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry (SACAR); Shri Bimal Shankar Nanda, Associate Professor of Political Science at Charuchandra College, University of Calcutta



Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS

and Dr. K. Jayaprasad, Former Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Kerala.

The initial speaker of the session, Prof. V Ananda Reddy, focused his discussion on the prospective future of Indian polity as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo. He highlighted the critical perspectives that Sri Aurobindo held regarding parliamentary democracy. Throughout his discourse, he elaborated on Sri Aurobindo's concept of an ideal state and concluded his presentation by discussing how Sri Maa (Mother) envisioned a future governance system in India that would be devoid of political parties and based on mutual understanding and collective collaboration over competitive politics or power struggles. The speaker asserted that the future development of Indian democracy should align with the visions of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Maa.

The following speaker, Shri Bimal Shankar Nanda spoke on the topic describing constitutional milestones in the history of development of democracy in India the Loksabha election of 1977 and 2014. The speaker said that he selected the two elections as he considers them to be true milestones of Indian democracy. He said that the result of the 1977 election was significant because it not only saved the democratic polity and political landscape of India but also demonstrated maturity and consciousness of the common Indian electorate. The speaker noted that similarly the election result of 2014 was significant as it demonstrated the Indian electorate's

ambition to build up India as a powerful state that would strengthen the nation's role in International politics. He concluded his deliberation by stating that if the bill of one vote and one nation is passed by the Indian Parliament it would be considered as the next major milestone of Indian democracy.

The last speaker of the session, Dr. K. Jayaprasad spoke on the 75 years of journey of Indian Parliamentary Democracy, Challenges and Responses. In his speech, he mentioned about how India has remained a stable and sustainable democracy in the global south. Referring to India as the mother of democracy he articulated the gradual evolution of Indian democracy since independence which boasts a vibrant constitution that proved to be flexible and adaptable. During his discussion, the speaker mentioned how through 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, democracy reached at the grassroots level across the country. Additionally, he elaborated on the evolution of the party system in India since independence and the challenges faced by Indian democracy during the emergency period. Furthermore, he discussed how developmental issues have become central to Indian politics, considering it as a significant achievement for the nation in the past 75 years.

The session was summed up by the chair, Shri Sambuddha Chakrabarti, who, in his deliberation, spoke on the correlation between democracy and republic. Quoting the Vedas, Dharmasastras, and



*Shri Bimal Shankar Nanda,
Associate Professor of Political Science at Charuchandra
College, University of Calcutta*



Dr. V. Ananda Reddy, Founder and Director of Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry (SACAR)

accounts of foreign travellers, he illustrated how the elements of democracy and republic existed in ancient India, although they did not align with modern Western democratic standards. In his speech, he discussed the role of the Indian judiciary in safeguarding Indian democracy. He concluded by saying that while India should be proud of the success of its democracy, caution is necessary as the future path of Indian democracy may face difficult challenges in its journey.

The second academic session “Challenges to Democratic Institutions and Role of Public Policy” was chaired by Dr. Himansu K. Bose, Professor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). It had speakers like Prof. Dipankar Sengupta, Department of Economics, Jammu University; Dr. Sailendra Laha, Sri Aurobindonian Scholar and Shri Arun Anand, Author and Columnist, Consulting Editor, Network 18.

The initial speaker of the session, Dr. Sailendra Laha, addressed Sri Aurobindo’s vision of an eternal India. By extensively referencing articles published in the journal *Arya* between 1914 and 1921, Dr. Laha articulated Aurobindo’s perspective on Indian governance, which regarded India as a timeless spiritual civilization endowed with a divine purpose in the evolution of humanity. He highlighted Sri Aurobindo’s aspiration to elevate India based on its historical grandeur. Additionally, he discussed how Sri Aurobindo underscored the importance of cultural synthesis alongside unity in diversity.

The subsequent speaker, Prof. Dipankar Sengupta, addressed the topic of democratic decentralization and public policymaking. In his deliberation, he mentioned that economic decentralization was related to democratic decentralization in India. In his disquisition, he highlighted the importance of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, which according to him, disrupted the trend of centralization in Indian governance and facilitated the nation’s progression towards democratic decentralization. In his analysis, he articulated how the constitutional establishment of the panchayati system has significantly contributed to the development at the grassroots level in India, citing the successful implementation of the rainwater harvesting project in Gujarat as an example of the effectiveness of the Panchayat system. Additionally, he addressed the challenges faced by urban local self-governments in the country regarding project implementation. In his conclusion, he remarked that the objectives of *Biksit Bharat*, or Developed India, cannot be realized without providing adequate financial resources, authority, and capacity building for the local self government.

The final speaker of the session, Sri Arun Anand, addressed the issue of the threats that Indian democracy faces in context of public policy. During his discourse, he articulated how the current information ecosystem presents a significant challenge to democratic governance. By referencing the recent anti-government protests in Nepal, he illustrated how information warfare was employed to facilitate the collapse of a democratic regime. He emphasized that the proliferation of false information poses a serious risk to democracy and that India must exercise caution in this regard. In his presentation, he discussed the limitations of institutions such as the Press Council of India and the Editors Guild of India. Furthermore, he highlighted the increasing spread of misinformation through social media and the absence of adequate legislation to address this issue. He warned that in the near future, Indian democracy will confront the challenge of a battle of narratives.

The chair subsequently summarized the session with his own insights. Emphasizing the various threats



Dr. Himangshu K. Bose, Register, Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

confronting India as articulated by the speakers, the chair asserted that the current education system poses a greater challenge to Indian democracy than any other factor. In addition, he raised concerns regarding the accountability of local bodies that are purportedly involved in corruption during project implementation. Nevertheless, he underscored the importance of formulating public policies that are oriented towards the needs of the people.

The third academic session “Citizen Participation & Electronic Governance” chaired by Prof. Dipankar Sengupta from the Department of Economics, featured scholars such as Dr. Himangshu K. Bose, Professor at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU); Professor Biswanath Chakraborty from the Department of Political Science at RabindraBharati University and Professor Subimal Bhattacharjee, Head of Critical and Emerging Technologies at Society to Harmonise Aspirations for Responsible Engagement.

The initial speaker of the third academic session, Dr. Himangshu Bose, addressed the subject of electronic governance in India, emphasizing various facets of e-governance. He articulated that e-governance has transformed the dynamics between the government and its citizens, facilitating citizen involvement in decision-making processes. He noted that e-governance has rendered government services more accessible, enhanced transparency, and

established a channel of communication between citizens and the administration. Throughout his address, he underscored numerous benefits of e-governance as well as the challenges it faces. Additionally, he discussed the future steps necessary to tackle the challenges associated with e-governance.

The speaker, Prof. Biswanath Chakraborty, addressed the topic of local governance and citizen engagement, specifically examining participatory democracy within the framework of the Biksit Bharat Vision 2047. He commenced his address by posing the question of whether Indian democracy is sufficiently equipped at the grassroots level to achieve the vision of a Bikshit Bharat. During his discourse, he pointed out the positive aspects of strengthening of the local self- government by highlighting the significant increase in the transfer of funds to local self-governments under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Furthermore, he noted the enhanced participation of women in local governance under the current administration of Shri Modi. Nevertheless, he also pointed out several limitations, including the reluctance of state governments to delegate powers to local governments, bureaucratic resistance, the restricted role of local governments in developmental policy-making, the growing fragmentation of society due to identity politics, the lack of resources available to local governments, and the escalating electoral violence during local self-government elections, particularly in West Bengal.



Justice (Retd.) Shri Sambuddha Chakrabarti



Dr. K. Jayaprasad, Former Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Kerala

The final speaker of the session, Professor Subimal Bhattacharjee, addressed the impact of technology on India's destiny. He commenced his discussion by highlighting how technology has facilitated the development of governance, rendering it more democratic in essence. He asserted that technology

has fostered greater citizen engagement in governance and has empowered individuals. Furthermore, he noted that technology generates positive outcomes and contributes to national growth by enabling a clearer perspective of the Nation or Rastra. In his address, the speaker referenced how technological innovations such as Aadhar and UPI have successfully reached a vast segment of Indian population. In the due course of his speech, he identified various limitations and benefits associated with technology. Along with this, the speaker illuminated the remarkable progress India has made in the realm of Artificial Intelligence.

The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Amartya Kumar Dutta, who expressed gratitude to the organizers, including the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Sri Aurobindo Bhavan in Kolkata, The Auroville Foundation, and Sri Aurobindo Centre For Advanced Research (SACAR). He commended the organizers for their excellent coordination in successfully hosting the one-day seminar.



Participants at the Seminar



INDIAN OCEAN
RESOURCE CENTRE

INDIAN OCEAN RESOURCE CENTRE (IORC)



National Seminar on Arikamedu Revisited: A Postcolonial Indian Ocean History and Archaeology

14th September, 2025 | Puducherry



The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS) in association with Department of Art and Culture, Government of Puducherry, Department of Tourism, Government of Puducherry, Indian Ocean Resource Centre organized, an one day national seminar in collaboration with World Peace Trust and Sri Aurobindo Mandir, Nabadwip titled “Arikamedu Revisited: A Postcolonial Indian Ocean History and Archaeology” on 14th September, 2025 at the Residency Tower, Puducherry.

Arikamedu is not merely a site of ancient trade with the Roman world, but also as a vital hub in the intricate network of Indian Ocean interaction that pre-date and outlast colonial interpretations. This academic seminar seeks to challenge Eurocentric narratives and highlight indigenous agency, maritime networks, and cultural exchange that defined the region long before and after the colonial

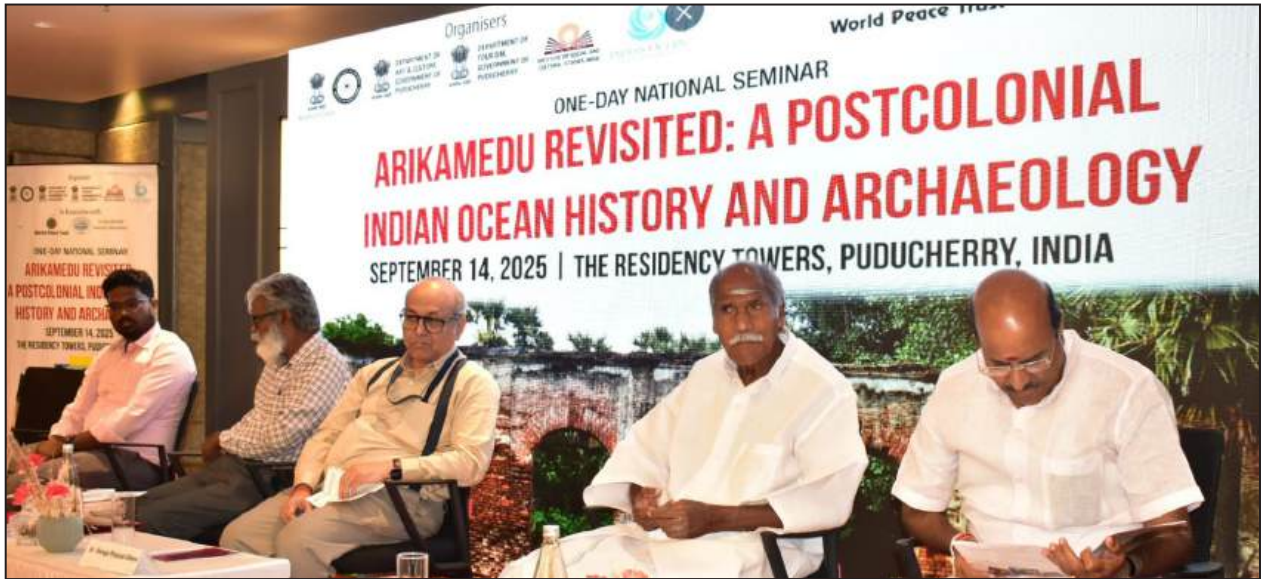
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This academic seminar was addressed by a distinguished panel of archaeologists, historians, and scholars who deliberated on reassessing Arikamedu’s role as a multi-cultural, long-duration maritime port beyond the colonial ‘Roman factory’ label and its multiple links. Their deliberation offered a critique to historical terminologies and interpretive models applied to Indian Ocean trade.

The inaugural session of the conference was graced by the presence of H.E. N. Rangasamy, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Government of Puducherry, as the Chief Guest, and H.E. K. Lakshminarayanan, Hon’ble Minister for Public Works, Government of Puducherry, as the Guest of Honour.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. V. Selvakumar, Head of the Department of Maritime History and Maritime Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur. The session was chaired by H.E. P.R.N. Thirumurugan, Hon’ble Minister for Art and Culture, Government of Puducherry.

The session also witnessed the presence of Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, and Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies.



(L-R) H.E. P.R.N. Thirumurugan, Hon’ble Minister for Art and Culture, Government of Puducherry; Dr. V. Selvakumar, Head of the Department of Maritime History and Maritime Archaeology, Tamil University; Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS; H.E. N. Rangasamy, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Government of Puducherry; H.E. K. Lakshminarayanan, Hon’ble Minister for Public Works, Government of Puducherry

The speakers of the inaugural session highlighted the historical and archaeological significance of Arikamedu as a key maritime centre of ancient India and an important node in the Indian Ocean trade network. Emphasizing its role in shaping early cultural, commercial, and transoceanic interactions, the speakers underlined Arikamedu’s enduring relevance to India’s maritime heritage and regional

history. The session also found the mentioning of how the government of Puducherry was carrying out its efforts to protect the site of Arikamedu.

Academic Session-I delved into the topic ‘Archaeology and Chronology of Arikamedu’ which was chaired by Dr. V.P. Yathees Kumar, Deputy Director, Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department and had eminent speakers like Dr. P. Ravichandirane, Assistant



H.E. N. Rangasamy, Hon’ble Chief Minister, Government of Puducherry and H.E. K. Lakshminarayanan, Hon’ble Minister for Public Works, Government of Puducherry formally Inaugurating the Seminar

Professor, Tagore Arts College, Puducherry; Prof. Rama Das, Former Joint Director, Education Department, Government of Puducherry and Dr. M.P. Ramanujam, Member of Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC), Government of Puducherry; Member of Puducherry State Higher Education Council (PMUSA), Government of Puducherry (2014 – till date) and Member of Commission on Education and Communication



Prof. Arindam Mukherjee

(CEC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) since 2005, whose valuable lectures added to the gravitas of the session.

Academic Session-II dealt with the topic of 'Exchange and Cultural Diversity in Indian Ocean Networks' Chaired by Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. The session hosted speakers like Rizvan PS,



Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh



Dr. V. Selvakumar

Doctoral Fellow, Hyderabad Central University; Dr. K.P. Shajan, Museum Consultant, Kerala Council For Historical Research (KCHR), Pattanam and Dr. D. Dayalan, Archaeological Advisor, Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology and Ex. Director, Archaeological Survey of India.

Academic Session-III titled 'Decolonizing Indian Ocean Archaeology' was chaired by the Honourable Director of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh that had the presence of speakers like Dr. V. Selvakumar, Researcher and HOD of Department of Maritime History and Marine Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur; Dr. J. Bhaskar, Asst. Director, Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department, Chennai and Dr. Arun Raj. T, Regional Director, Archaeological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, GOI whose insightful lectures made valuable contributions to the program.



Dr. P. Ravichandirane



Audience and Participants at the Seminar



BANGLADESH STUDIES



Panel Discussion on Bangladesh General Elections 2026: Future of Indo-Bangladesh Relations

27 February, 2026 | Dr. Amedkar International Centre (DAIC), New Delhi

A distinguished panel comprising Ambassador Sanjay Bhattacharyya, IFS (Retd.); Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik; Shri Dipankar Roy Choudhary; and Prof. Pritam Banerjee deliberated on the theme “Bangladesh General Elections 2026: Future of Indo-Bangladesh Relations” on 27 February, 2026 at Dr. Amedkar International Centre, New Delhi. The session was moderated by Manoj Kumar Lall, IPS (Retd.), with Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Director of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, present on the dais.



The poster features the logo of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) at the top. The main title is "Panel Discussion on BANGLADESH GENERAL ELECTION 2026: FUTURE OF INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS". Below the title, it states the date "Date- 27th February 2026 | 3 pm onwards" and the venue "Venue- Nalanda Auditorium, Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), 15, Janpath, New Delhi-01". A central image shows a ballot box overflowing with white ballots. The bottom section lists the speakers and moderator:

Distinguished Speakers

Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, IFS (Retd.) <i>Former Diplomat and Independent consultant and a Professor of Diplomatic Practice at Jindal Global University, India</i>	Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik <i>Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis</i>
Shri Pritam Banerjee <i>Head of Centre for WTO Studies, Department of Commerce, GOI</i>	Shri Dipankar Roy Chaudhury <i>Diplomatic Editor, The Economic Times</i>

Moderator

Shri Manoj Kumar Lall, IPS (Retd.)
Distinguished Fellow, ISCS

You are Cordially Invited

Contact: doffices@iscs@gmail.com **Shri Arindam Mukherjee**
Director, ISCS

Cycles of Political Upheaval

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has undergone recurring cycles of political rupture and restoration. The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family in 1975—survived only by Sheikh Hasina, who was abroad—was followed by the 1981 assassination of Ziaur Rahman. The 1990s witnessed prolonged turbulence and confrontation; the 2001–2007 period was marked by organized syndicate corruption and crime, and Pakistan-backed Islamist militancy; the 21 August, 2004 grenade attack targeted Sheikh Hasina; and the July 2024 student-led uprising once again unsettled the political order. These episodes reveal a pattern not of linear consolidation but of disruption followed by recalibration.

The July uprising, led by students and youth formations, exhibited features reminiscent of global protest movements and was reportedly encouraged and supported by external actors, including the United States, Pakistan, China, and Turkey. The appointment of Muhammad Yunus as Chief Adviser marked a decisive inflection point, accompanied by a recalibration of India policy and the lifting of restrictions on Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. Yunus’s subsequent visit to China, along with reported engagements between Shafiqur Rahman and Chinese interlocutors, signalled a broader strategic reorientation during the transitional phase.

The rise and political rehabilitation of Islamist forces, particularly Jamaat, needs to be viewed within this wider geopolitical matrix. The United States’ renewed engagement with Bangladesh is widely interpreted as part of its broader Indo-Pacific

strategy to counterbalance Chinese influence in the Bay of Bengal and Myanmar. Pakistan’s historical linkages with Islamist networks, Turkey’s ideological outreach under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and China’s pragmatic engagement with emerging actors collectively created an environment in which Jamaat found expanded diplomatic and political space. During the interim phase, Yunus’s policy decisions, especially the removal of restrictions on Jamaat, effectively widened that space within Bangladesh’s political arena. These external alignments and domestic recalibrations intersected in consequential ways, contributing to the restructuring of the country’s political landscape.

Restructuring of Political Order

The removal of Sheikh Hasina and the weakening of the Bangladesh Awami League, alongside the rise of Tarique Rahman and the resurgence of Jamaat under Shafiqur Rahman, have fundamentally restructured Bangladesh’s political balance. For India, this represents not merely a change in leadership but the emergence of a transformed political ecosystem requiring careful reassessment.

Although student forces catalysed the uprising, they failed to translate mobilisation into sustained electoral dominance, underscoring the organisational resilience of established parties. Jamaat maintains linkages with transnational Islamist “brotherhood” networks and is reported to have connections with elements of the Pakistani establishment, most notably the ISI. Its strategic objective remains the implementation of Sharia, with electoral participation serving as a pathway to acquiring state power and institutionalising a theocratic order. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, by contrast, aims to penetrate key state institutions—government, the military, administration, police, intelligentsia, and civil society—in order to restructure governance from within and, through the apparatus of the state, ultimately recast society along its ideological vision.

At the same time, Islamic Andolan and several ulema-based organisations contest Jamaat’s claim to Islamic leadership, rejecting Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi’s interpretive authority and asserting that Islamic governance should remain under scholarly rather than partisan direction. In a striking irony, the



Panellists at the Seminar

April 2017 decision of Sheikh Hasina's government to recognise the Dawra-e-Hadith qualification of Qawmi madrasas as equivalent to a Master's degree in Islamic Studies and Arabic enabled madrasa graduates to access public employment and higher education under formal equivalence.

Despite what was described as active support from segments of the interim dispensation and certain external actors, Jamaat did not secure power, suggesting that democratic and secular impulses continue to shape Bangladeshi society. Its electoral successes in districts bordering West Bengal appear linked more to welfare outreach and organisational infrastructure than to ideological ascendancy. The restoration of democracy following earlier phases of martial law, and again after the interim government, reflects an enduring societal resilience.

Tarique Rahman's Political Evolution

During the administrations of Khaleda Zia (1991–1996; 2001–2006), Tarique Rahman was widely perceived as a principal centre of informal authority. Critics associated the period with patronage networks and syndicate politics. The 2004 Chittagong ten-truck arms seizure, allegedly linked to insurgent formations such as ULFA, intensified scrutiny of networks operating from Hawa Bhaban and reinforced perceptions of extra-institutional influence.

His exile in London after 2007 marked a structural turning point. Over nearly two decades, Tarique appears to have recalibrated his political persona, shifting from an informal power broker to a more measured and strategically positioned leader. His emphasis on institutionalism, moderated rhetoric, and broader national outreach reflects an effort to reposition himself as a statesman capable of steering Bangladesh through transition.

Engagement with reformist platforms such as the July Charter, and efforts to balance Islamist allies with student constituencies, suggest pragmatic recalibration rather than ideological transformation. Having not previously held constitutional office, his assumption of the prime ministership would represent his first direct exercise of executive authority. The challenge lies in translating political

evolution into governance capacity amid domestic fragmentation and shifting geopolitical currents.

Liberation Legacy and Democratic Continuity

Interpreting Jamaat's resurgence and the relative weakening of the Awami League as evidence of a permanent erosion of the Liberation legacy would be premature. Acts such as vandalising statues of Mujib or Rabindranath Tagore, while symbolically provocative, do not necessarily reflect majority sentiment. Historical precedent demonstrates recovery: the Awami League revived in the late 1990s despite the near-elimination of the Mujib family in 1975.

Reports that many Awami supporters abstained or voted defensively amid apprehensions indicate that political space may yet reopen. Should leadership figures currently abroad return through due legal process, the party could reclaim electoral ground. Ensuring a safe and inclusive political environment may also serve the long-term interests of the BNP, since unchecked Islamist consolidation could marginalise mainstream actors across the spectrum. Stable democratic competition remains essential for both Bangladesh's internal equilibrium and India's strategic interests.

Economic Pressures and Strategic Interdependence

The political crisis coincided with global trade volatility triggered by renewed tariff regimes under the Trump administration and unfolded at a particularly inopportune moment for Bangladesh. The situation was further complicated by Yunus's suspension of bilateral trade relations with India. Bangladesh's foreign exchange stability depends heavily on ready-made garment exports to Western markets and remittances from the Gulf and Europe. Reliance on Indian ports for logistics amplifies vulnerability to regional disruptions.

Although Bangladesh deferred its 2026 graduation from Least Developed Country status to preserve preferential access temporarily, eventual graduation remains inevitable. Competing alongside India, Cambodia, and Vietnam without differential advantages will require structural diversification. Adjustments in U.S.–Bangladesh trade terms may further affect competitiveness.

India's connectivity investments under the BIMSTЕК framework—integrating multimodal transport corridors—were designed to reinforce regional supply chains and economic integration. Disruptions to this trajectory have imposed greater economic costs on Bangladesh. Diversifying beyond RMG exports and deepening manufacturing capacity—both essential to sustaining economic momentum—will necessitate stable regional partnerships, for which India remains well positioned. The restoration of bus links and visa services reflects mutual recognition of interdependence.

Water, Security, and Diplomatic Reset

Water-sharing arrangements concerning the Ganga and Teesta continue to present complex challenges. India has indicated that future frameworks must reflect evolving realities rather than automatic renewal, underscoring the importance of sustained dialogue.

Security remains India's principal red line. Any tolerance of terrorism, insurgency, or radicalisation emanating from Bangladeshi territory would undermine bilateral trust and necessitate enhanced vigilance. Preventing the resurgence of extremist networks and external intelligence penetration is therefore critical.

India's early diplomatic outreach—including congratulatory communication from the Prime Minister, condolences conveyed by the External Affairs Minister, and parliamentary representation at the swearing-in ceremony—signals a deliberate effort to reset relations with the incumbent democratic government in Dhaka. Tarique Rahman's conciliatory messaging, restoration of visa issuance, and stated commitment to constructive engagement reinforce cautious optimism.

Concluding Assessment

Bangladesh's transition from the political rupture of 2024 to a gradual return to normalcy, as reflected in the General Elections of 2026, suggests recalibration across its polity, economy, diplomacy, and strategic outlook. Democratic resilience, economic diversification, calibrated management of Islamist pressures, and stable engagement with India will



Ambassador Sanjay Bhattacharyya, IFS (Retd.)

shape the coming phase. For India, the strategic imperative lies in maintaining firmness on security concerns while exercising diplomatic flexibility and sustaining economic partnership. For Bangladesh, the central task will be to translate political realignment into institutional consolidation without diluting the pluralist ethos that has resurfaced repeatedly in its history.

Taken together, the 2026 election outcome and the early gestures of the new government in Dhaka offer grounds for cautious optimism in bilateral relations. They suggest that the intervening phase may prove to be an episodic disruption rather than a lasting structural shift, provided that democratic norms and the secular legacy of the Liberation War continue to anchor Bangladesh's political trajectory.

Panel Discussion on Journalist's Take on Bangladesh General Election 2026: Future of Indo- Bangladesh Relations

13th March, 2026 | Anchorage, Polo Floatel, Kolkata

On Thursday, March 13, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) held a discussion session at the floating restaurant Flotel, located near Babughat in Kolkata. Three notable journalists from Kolkata took part in this discussion. These individuals were among the top reporters from India who travelled to Bangladesh to cover the nation's 13th National Parliamentary Election: Amal Sarkar (The Wall), Anamitra Chatterjee (Ei Samay), and Arkomoy Datta Majumdar (India Today). The session was chaired by Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, the Director of ISCS.

This parliamentary election in Bangladesh was significant as it was the first instance where the polls

occurred without the involvement of the country's largest party-the outgoing ruling Awami League. All three journalists were in Bangladesh on the day of the election. They observed a unique festive atmosphere on Election Day. However, despite the interim government led by Md. Yunus officially banning the Awami League, the party's importance in the electoral context actually grew. Both opposing factions-the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami-were eager to win over the League's traditional voter base. Ultimately, the journalists concluded that those League supporters who did participate in the voting opted to back the BNP.

All three journalists who reported on the election voiced doubts about the genuine intent behind the referendum that coincided with the parliamentary elections. Drawing from their firsthand experiences in journalism, they contended that conducting a national election alongside a referendum on the same day is an unusual approach. Specifically, they found the referendum ballot-which included



The poster features the ISCS logo at the top left, a graphic of interlocking puzzle pieces in the colors of the Indian and Bangladeshi flags, and the event title in bold red text. It lists the date, time, and location, followed by the names and titles of the chairperson and speakers. Contact information and an 'Entry by invitation only' note are at the bottom.

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

**Panel Discussion on
JOURNALISTS' TAKE
ON BANGLADESH
GENERAL ELECTION 2026:
FUTURE OF INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS**

13th March, 2026 | 4 pm onwards
Anchorage, Polo Floatel, Kolkata
9/10 Kolkata Jetty, Strand Road

Chairperson
Prof. Arindam Mukherjee
Director, ISCS

Distinguished Speakers

Shri Amal Sarkar
Executive Editor at The Wall

Shri Arkamay Datta Majumdar
Assistant Editor at India Today
Magazine

Shri Anamitra Chatterjee
Eminent Journalist at Ei Samay

Contact
+91-9007387752
doofficeiscs@gmail.com

Entry by invitation only



Shri Arkomoy Datta Majumdar Addressing the Seminar

numerous issues-to be quite inconsistent; they argued that asking for a single “Yes” or “No” answer on a ballot that covers such a wide array of topics is fundamentally perplexing.

Journalist Anamitra Chatterjee claimed that the referendum-purportedly organized to amend the constitution under the guise of implementing the “July Charter” while effectively circumventing established democratic principles-was, in truth, merely an effort to create an Islamic constitution. He believed that the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami had only pretended to be rivals to ensure the election proceeded smoothly. He also pointed out that Tarique Rahman won the Dhaka-17 constituency by a margin of just over 4,000 votes; to secure Tarique’s win, compromises had to be made-specifically, by allowing certain leaders from the opposing side to achieve their own electoral victories. According to Anamitra, the entire process unfolded through a shared understanding. There was no rival candidate contesting against Hasnat Abdullah. Nahid Islam also clinched victory at the very last moment. Even Jamaat’s Amir, Shafiqur, emerged victorious in the final moments after lagging behind for a significant time. Anamitra has described this election as a “media coup.”

Amal Sarkar shares a similar viewpoint, noting that there were clear inconsistencies in both the voting process and the subsequent results announcement. He also believes that effectively sidelining the Awami League from the electoral process was a challenging task. Sarkar suspects that several parties were involved



Prof. Arindam Mukherjee



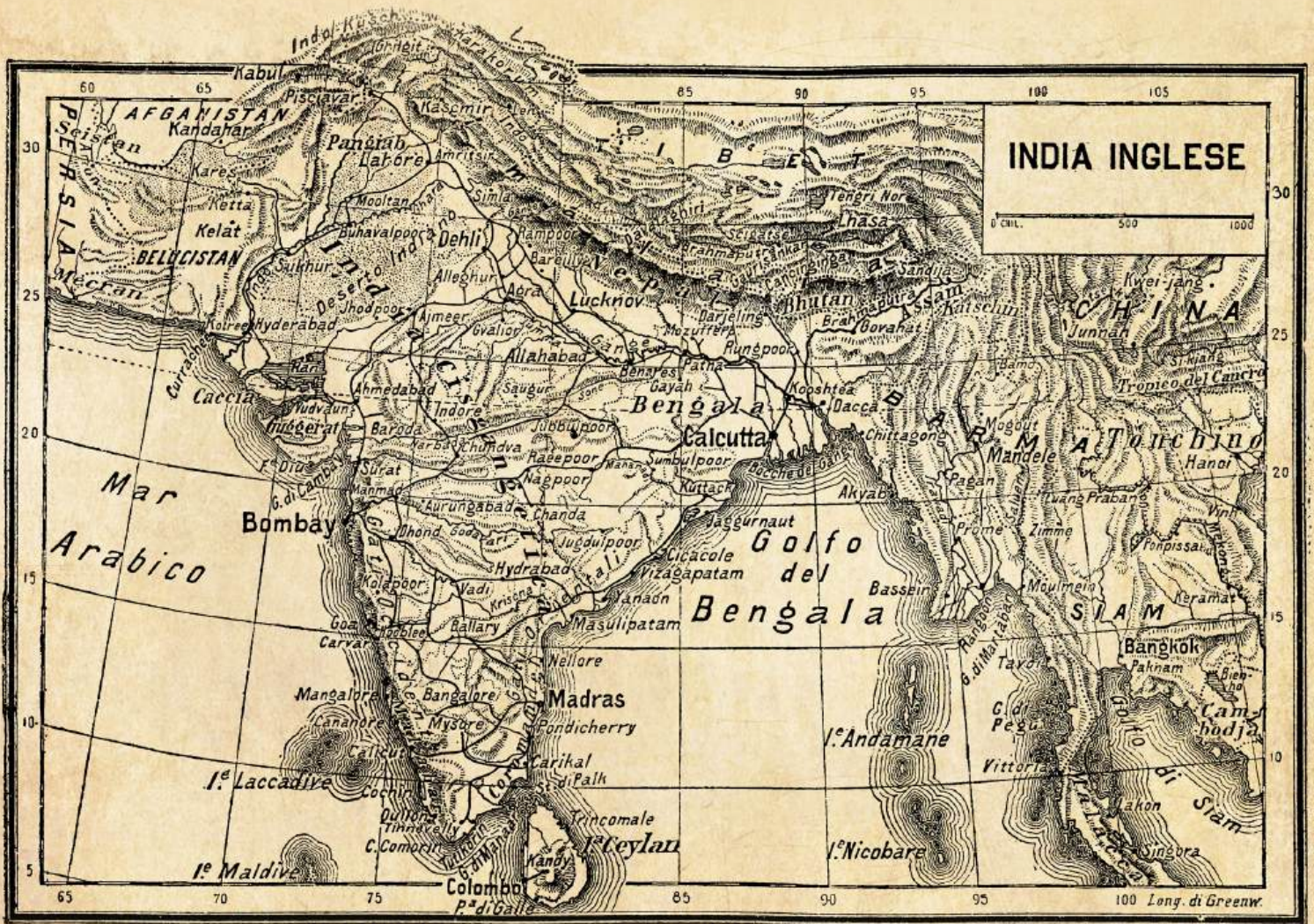
Shri Amal Sarkar

in orchestrating this outcome. Arkomoy Datta Majumdar points out that there were reasons to suspect manipulation, particularly during the vote-counting phase. He claims that Jamaat was leading during the early counting stages in rural areas. The BNP was optimistic about winning between 170 and 180 seats; however, they could not have anticipated surpassing the 200-seat threshold.

Anamitra asserts that there have been previous plans in the United States to position Muhammad Yunus as the leader of Bangladesh, aiming to elevate him to the highest office in the country. Amal Sarkar believes that the main focus of this election was the Liberation War of 1971. With the Awami League absent, the BNP was eager to win by leveraging the emotions tied to that significant year. At the same time, Jamaat made deliberate efforts to present itself as a moderate Islamic political party. As a result, in an unprecedented action, Jamaat nominated a Hindu candidate in one specific constituency.

Throughout the day’s events, as they shared their experiences related to the election, the journalists suggested looking into ways to enhance the positive relations between the citizens of the two countries in the future. This would also include promoting collaboration at the administrative level, considering their proximity as neighboring nations. The session wrapped up with the viewing of a documentary that detailed the election of Bangladesh’s 13th National Parliament.

NEIGHBOURHOOD STUDIES



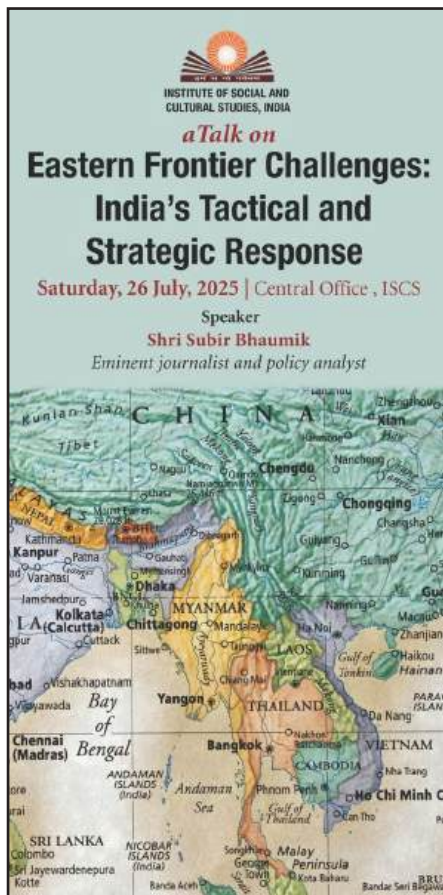
Talk on
Eastern Frontier Challenges: India's Tactical and Strategic Response
 26th July, 2025 | ISCS's Interactive Zone – Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) as a part of its initiatives and series of Talks on contemporary issues organized yet another captivating session on Eastern Frontier Challenges: India's Tactical and Strategic Response in the evening on 26th July, 2025 at ISCS's interactive zone itself.

The Talk initiated with introductory note by the Director of the Institute, Shri Arindam Mukherjee who underlined institute's varied curve of work

focussing on the Eastern frontier, North East and neighbourhood precisely. The motion was then taken over by the speaker of the event Shri Subir Bhowmik, renowned journalist and a policy analyst with deep experience on strategical analysis circling eastern corridor of the country.

The event followed Chatham House Guidelines, the participants of the event comprised of eminent policy makers, academicians and prominent civil society actors. The event turned out to be very enriching as the deliberation by the speaker followed by the interactive session brought about certain key issues.



Shri Subir Bhowmik and Prof. Arindam Mukherjee



Shri Subir Bhowmik

Morning Dialogue on Neighborhood Elections and its Impact on India

28th March, 2026 | The Harmony, Vivanta Kolkata

Recently, pivotal elections took place in several countries neighboring India which included Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The outcomes of these elections in one hand are crucial as they directly influence each country's foreign policy, economic priorities, and diplomatic ties with India. On the other hand, it influences India's security, trade, and regional influence. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of these elections is vital for assessing India's strategic interests and stability in South Asia.

In light of these developments, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, a Kolkata-based think tank recognized by the Ministry of Education on 28th March 2026 organized a panel discussion titled "Neighbourhood Elections and Their Impact on India". The event attracted a diverse group



*Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Shri Manoj Kumar Lall,
Shri Ranjit Rae and Shri Amrit Lugun*

of participants, including leading academicians, seasoned political and security analysts, students, members of civil society.

Moderated by Shri Manoj Kumar Lall, IPS (Retd) & Distinguished Fellow ISCS it had eminent speakers like Shri Ranjit Rae, Former Ambassador of India to Nepal, Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik, Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi, Shri Amrit Lugun IFS (Retd).

The academic discussion began with the address of Shri Manoj Kumar Lall, the programme moderator, who emphasized Kolkata's significance in relation to Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. He discussed about the mass movements in Bangladesh and Nepal highlighting their pivotal role in regime changes and the subsequent electoral process. However, he noted that the post-election situations in these countries are quite different. Regarding Myanmar, he characterized the recent election as restrictive. He expressed hope that the distinguished speakers would shed light on

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

**Madan Mohan Malaviya Institute of Asian Studies
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India**

Morning Dialogue
**ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ELECTIONS
AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA**

28th March, 2026 | 8.30 am onwards
The Harmony, Vivanta Kolkata, EM Bypass,
1930 Rajdanga Main Road, Kolkata-700197

Distinguished Speakers

Shri Ranjit Rae
Former Ambassador of India to Nepal

Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik
Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi

Amb. Amrit Lugun
IFS (Retd.)

Moderator
Shri Manoj Kumar Lall, IPS(Retd.)
Former DGP, Punalcherry

Prof. Arindam Mukherjee
Director, ISCS

Dr. Satrajit Ghosh
Director, MAEMAS

Entry Strictly by Invitation

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Participants and Panellists of Morning Dialogue

the strategic, economic, and security implications for India stemming from political changes in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

The first speaker Shri Ranjit Rae, initiated his deliberation highlighting the need to understand a couple of things while analyzing the recent election in India's neighbourhood and its potential impact. He underscored the need to have a comprehensive understanding of the domestic situations of India's neighbouring countries, how major power dynamics particularly the relationships among India, China, and the United States is shaping New Delhi's ties with its neighbours and how the recent turbulence in international affairs is shaping India's relationship with its neighbours.

The speaker thereafter identified how a young demography in India's neighbourhood empowered by digital power and supported by an active diaspora population is acting as a key force driving political development in the region.

He then referred to the adoption of the new constitution in 2015, which he described as a major milestone in Nepal's political landscape since independence. He noted that the constitution was more accommodative in nature but added that persistent issues such as unstable governance,



Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik and Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh

widespread corruption, and the limited initiative of the older leadership have stalled further reforms, leading to growing public dissatisfaction.

He explained that this dissatisfaction led to a change of regime in Nepal, resulting in replacement of the old political guard with new young leadership. He highlighted that the present Prime minister of Nepal is young and his party is dominated by a younger leadership.

He observed that India's approach to Nepal's election was positive, as evidenced by New Delhi's support for the electoral process, Prime Minister Modi's endorsement of the Gen Z movement and his warm telephonic conversation with the newly elected leadership.

The speaker also pointed out that in the recent Nepalese election, both the communist parties and the monarchy-aligned party underperformed, noting that historically, both groups have supported anti-India rhetoric.

He noted that with the defeat of Nepal's communist parties, China's influence in the country might diminish, and expressed hope that the current Nepalese leadership might reconsider the Chinese-funded Belt and Road Initiative projects in Nepal. He emphasized that the new government has a development-oriented vision and is committed to promoting corruption-free governance. To achieve these goals, he added, Nepal must maintain a strong relationship with India. In his discussion, he also addressed key issues such as the India-Nepal border dispute over the Kalapani-Limpiyadhura-Lipu Lek region, the potential revision of the 1950 India-Nepal Friendship Treaty, river water management, and bilateral trade between the two countries.

The next speaker Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik focused her discussion over the recent election of Bangladesh and its impact over India and South Asia in general. She initiated her discussion by analyzing the evolution

of the student agitation in Bangladesh that primarily demanded abolition of quota system in the country to a broader anti discrimination movement that finally led in the downfall of the Hasina led government.

In her analysis, she argued that the heavy-handed approach of the Hasina government in restricting civil liberties, along with widespread corruption particularly linked to the quota system created deep dissatisfaction among the public. This discontent, she suggested, fueled the mass anti-government movement. She also referred to the death of Abu Syed, noting its significant impact in intensifying protests across the country.

During her discourse, the speaker discussed Jamaat-e- Islami Bangladesh, describing it as anti-liberation and pro – Pakistani political organization. She noted that its student wing, the Chhatra Shibbir, successfully infiltrated the anti- quota movement.

She further highlighted the breakdown of law and order following Hasina's resignation. According to her, police forces refrained from reporting to duty due to mob attacks resulting in the death and injuries of several officers and personal. She opined that the police were perceived as having supported the Awami League in suppressing dissent, making them a target of public anger. As a result of this the Bangladesh Army had to step in to restore order.

She also drew attention to coordinated attacks on minorities and Awami League supporters, including incidents of mob lynching and vandalism. She said



Shri Ranjit Rae sharing his ideas

violence continued even after Muhammad Yunus assumed leadership of the interim government. Mob violence incited by Islamic radical forces in the name of Towhidi Janata reached its peak and added that concerns over women's safety and freedom became particularly acute during this period.

Turning to the 13th parliamentary elections, she observed that some student leaders from the anti-discrimination movement became disillusioned when the National Citizen Party formed an alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami. She also highlighted the electoral rise of Jamaat-e-Islami, which secured 77 parliamentary constituencies. According to her, this rise was partly due to the Awami League's long-standing focus on weakening the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, its primary rival, while underestimating Jamaat. This allowed Jamaat cadres to quietly infiltrate the Awami League and its affiliated bodies, later emerging more prominently after Hasina's fall.

She then discussed the electoral success of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party under the leadership of Tarique Rahman. While noting his relatively positive signals toward India after assuming power, she cautioned that key bilateral issues remain unresolved and will require careful negotiation. As an example, she cited the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which is set to expire this year and remains a potential point of contention between the two countries.

The last panelist Amrit Lugin centered his discussion on the recently held election in Myanmar. He commenced his disquisition by analyzing the difference between the recently held election in Myanmar and those in Nepal and Bangladesh. He said that while election in Myanmar was taking place in the midst of a civil war the elections were taking place in Nepal and Bangladesh were held following anti-government protests that led to the fall of their respective governments.

He then provided a brief overview of the political developments that led to the military coup and the ensuing civil war in the country.

The speaker highlighted that while in 2020 more than 90 parties had contested the election. It dropped to 57 in the 2026 election, largely due to

strict registration requirements and banning of certain parties. He also added how due to civil war in the country the military Junta was able to conduct election in only 265 out of 330 townships.

Following this, he shifted his focus to the recent electoral amendments enacted by the military Junta. He emphasized that one of the most significant electoral change was the introduction of a proportional representation (PR) system, marking a major shift from the earlier First Past the Post (FPTP) system. The speaker stated that such electoral amendment had benefited military-aligned and smaller parties, allowing them to gain seats without broad popular support and reduced the advantage of large opposition parties, especially those with concentrated voter bases. He added that the military leadership came up with the proportional representation system as because they thought that they would not be successful through the First Past the Post System.

Sri Lugin said that combined with restrictive party laws and introduction of proportional representation system the speaker opined that military-backed system have been successful in tilting the electoral field in their favor.

The speaker briefly addressed the responses of China and the United States, noting their cautious 'wait and watch' approach.

Turning to India-Myanmar relations in the post-election context, the distinguished speaker stated that India maintains a balanced and neutral stance toward both the democratic forces and the military regime, and is likely to continue doing so. He noted that the ongoing civil war disrupted India's key infrastructure projects in Myanmar, leading to delays. However, he expressed confidence that India's soft power diplomacy could play a significant role in addressing this crisis. He also discussed the potential impact of the civil war in Myanmar on the Kuki-Chin-Mizo belt of India.

The programme ended with the vote of thanks from Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies.

पुर्वोदय



Purvodaya Lit Fest, Second Edition

24th to 28th November, 2025 | Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (RTC, ICCR), Kolkata

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) organizes the Purvodaya Literary Festival that aims to celebrate the rich literary and cultural heritage of Eastern India, spanning states like West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Sikkim, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. ISCS and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, in association with Indian Council of Social Research, Nalanda University, National Book Trust and Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata, organized the second edition of the literature festival from 24th to 28th November, 2025 at the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (RTC, ICCR), Kolkata.

In regard to this festival ISCS planned to create an early momentum for the event and engage the student community in dialogue on literature, culture, and social development through a series of prelude events in the schools, colleges and universities. For school it was Katha Utsav and this event was organized in different schools like Dolna Day School, New Horizon and others while the



Student participant from Dolna Day School

events pertaining to college, which was an Extempore competition, was organized at the Adamas University on Rashtriya Ekta Divas along with others like Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Vidyamahapitha, Kamarpukur and Scottish Church College.

The lit up literary canvas as Purvodaya Lit Fest in its second year did bestow support of National Book Trust, Bhartiya Bhasha Samiti, Ministry of Education, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Ministry of Culture, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, and University of Nalanda and have become a source of inspiration to many to bring out their note pad and pen, puff out the dust settled as the post pandemic era accords greater significance to digitization to stimulate convergence between minds, thoughts, ideas and narration. The literary carnival as Purvodaya Lit Fest in its second year has already carved a distinct space for itself and promoted enthusiasm amongst the literary personalities and literature lovers from the eastern region namely, eight



Competition at New Horizon High School

states as an annual one stop visit. As the fest apart from disseminating dialogues and essaying thoughts of versatile set of writers from regions like West Bengal, Odisha, Tripura, Assam, Sikkim, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar did signal as a colossal of connect between publishers and personnel from the cultural field, who through their contributions and genre illuminated the rich cultural heritage that the region persists on the whole.

The event was also special as the timeline of the fest between 24th to 28th was deliberately chosen as each of the days marks a significance of a distinct type, for instance 25th of November resonates International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

whereas 26th of November being The Constitution Day or the Bhartiya Samvidhan Divas reckons the resilience and caliber of the constitution that remained unchanged and erect till day towards upholding the spirit of democracy.

The Festival did remain an empowering space for informed intellectual dialogue, where ideas are debated and stories shared, staged performances by the range of artists, promoted workshops, included access to the various print houses and publishers to acquaint multi-dimensional audiences with their diverse range of publications as well as artisans representing crafts of the region. But the most engaging was the competitions for audience across



Lighting of the Lamp by H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose, Governor of West Bengal at the Inaugural Session of the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest



H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose presenting the Purvodaya Literary Excellent Award to Smt. Paramita Stapathy

ages. That encouraged a great number of footfalls from the students' fraternity. The connections, compassion, exchange of dialogues, entertainment and inter-state connects of the east was once again skillfully nestled under the roofs of Purvodaya Lit Fest, that with time is slowly turning to be the Eastern India Annual Literary and Cultural fiesta.

The Fest on 24th of November, 2025 started with the inaugural session in the presence of Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose who as a Chief Guest marked the beginning of the 5 day long festival. Every year the Purvodaya Lit Fest honours distinguished writers with Purvodaya Literary Excellence Award from the region itself. This year Smt. Paramita Satpathy, eminent writer and influential voice of the Indian literary arena received the excellence award. She also thanked the organizers and in her address mentioned that the concept of gender mainstreaming should now be featured on a wider note as it will actually help society to progress and certain clichés to transgress from the society to a large extent.

As we all know about the writing passion of the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose and hence as a part of the occasion his book Nirabata Bhalo Shuve which is written in Odia, was released by all the dignitaries. The book is a compilation of essays drawn on stories, anecdotes, personal experiences, literary references, mythology and history to illuminate the complexities of human conduct and public systems altogether.



H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose



Smt. Paramita Satpathy

As a part of his address, the Hon'ble Governor explained how literature can scaffold human nature, inspires humans to take initiatives that ultimately creates apposite impact in their livelihood. He also shared some of his childhood experiences and how his readings written by eminent writers like RabindraNath Tagore, Shakespeare, Wordsworth has illuminated his life and also inspired him and his actions as a bureaucrat and have natured his writing skills. The Vote of Thanks was extended by Ms. Kankana Roy, Coordinator, Purvodaya Lit Fest, where she thanked all the supporting partners and contributions of the organizing team for their hard work and contributions in assembling the stage for such a vibrant fest at the heart of Kolkata.

Day -1, 24th November, 2025

Interactive Session: The first day was the Black and White Day and it featured the interface between film and Literature. Also this session was essential to pay tribute to three eminent personalities from Eastern India namely, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Shri Ritwick Ghatak and Uttam Kumar.

To celebrate the contributions of these eminent personalities at the Purvodaya Lit Fest, distinguished speakers like veteran actress Smt. Sabitri Chatterjee, Shri Arjun Chakraborty, renowned actor and author, Shri Sanjoy Mukhopadhyay, film critic and Shri Bidyut Kumar Bhuyan, journalist from Assam along with Shri Biswajit Ganguly set the stage for the discussion.

Competition:

On 24th November, 2025, a Literary Quiz Competition was organized at the second Purvodaya Literary Festival, at the Library of the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). This Quiz Competition, which was open to all, saw an overwhelming response from schools and colleges alike. Students from New Horizon School, Dolna Day School, Scottish Church College, Gokhale Memorial Girls' College, Bethune College, and Lady Brabourne College participated in the Quiz Competition.



The Quiz Competition



Discussion Session on Is Literature Relevant in Film Making ?

From Left - Smt. Sabitri Chatterjee, Shri Arjun Chakraborty, Shri Sanjoy Mukhopadhyay, Shri Bidyut Kumar Bhuyan and Shri Biswajit Ganguly

Cultural Event:

Cultural events were organized by performing artists on every single day of the Purvodaya Lit Fest. 24th November – on the very first day of the event, Sanskrit Drama– Meghadutam was staged by Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj between 5 to 6 pm at the Satyajit Ray Auditorium. Meghadutam written over 1500 years ago, remains a poetic masterpiece in Sanskrit literature themes, structure, style, and historical relevance and most importantly, the performance was highly appreciated by the audience.



*Sanskrit Drama Meghadutam by
Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj*

Day- 2, 25th November 2025 started with an interactive session Bimarsh which was organized between students from different schools like Narendrapur Ramkrishna Mission, New Horizon and Heritage School of Kolkata. The interaction took place between the students and

Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, MAKAIAS, Smt. Alo Sud – teacher by profession and curator of the Pondicherry Lit Fest along with Dr. Asitendu Datta and Professor of Mathematics at Jadavpur University, Dr. Buddhadeb Sau. The speakers interacted with the students interpreting the role of literature that would influence in setting their careers, nurture their skills and also would implant love for their nation, which is most important as in today's hard rush world, in pursuance of their aspiration, youths often forget about their duties and love that they should behold for their nation and thus should in some or the other way, through their careers and welfare services, should strive to serve their nation.

Interactive Session : As 25th of November is commemorated as the International Day for the elimination of the violence against women, a session was designed exquisitely to address the women in literature. The theme was illustrated by Smt. Paramita Satpathy and Smt. Alo Sud, whose works and association with various non-government organizations narrates the conflicts between the conscience-desire-reality that the women had to resolve before setting their foot out were present at the event. Also present was the most versatile Smt. Saswati Guha Tharurta, singer and actress who dared to challenge the set stereotypes and managed to acclaim fame in the television. She discussed how women themselves have to firstly decide to come out of their niche defaming the hesitations and of course the social odds that she is compounded in the given social structure.



Bimarsh : An Interactive Session



From left - Smt. Saswati Guha Tharkurata, Smt. Paramita Satpathy and Smt. Alo Sud

Competition : On 25th November, the second Purvodaya Literary Festival organized a Fashion Show for College students. The Fashion Show was held at the Sculptor Court of the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), from 3:00 pm onwards. This competition catered to students of eighteen to twenty-five years of age. Students from Gokhale Memorial College,

Shri Shikshayatan College and Narula Institute of Technology participated in this event. Each team consisted of a maximum of ten students. Time allotted to each group was ten minutes precisely. The theme of the Fashion Show was “Traditional Attire of Eastern India” with emphasis on states like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Sikkim, Assam,



Participants of the fashion show

Jharkhand, Tripura, and Eastern U.P. Participants were asked to be respectful towards the authenticity and traditional aspects regarding the attire. The participants were also asked to explain the history and tradition related to their outfits.

Cultural Event : On the second day of the fest Chau Dance performance was staged at the Satyajit Ray Auditorium from 6 pm onwards. Chhau dance is a tradition from eastern India that enacts episodes from epics. Mahishasurmardini was staged by one of the famous troupes of Purulia led by Shri Samir Mahato. The performance on folk melodies was played on the reed pipes mohuri and shehnai. The reverberating drumbeats of a variety of drums dominated the accompanying music ensemble and enthralled the audience present.



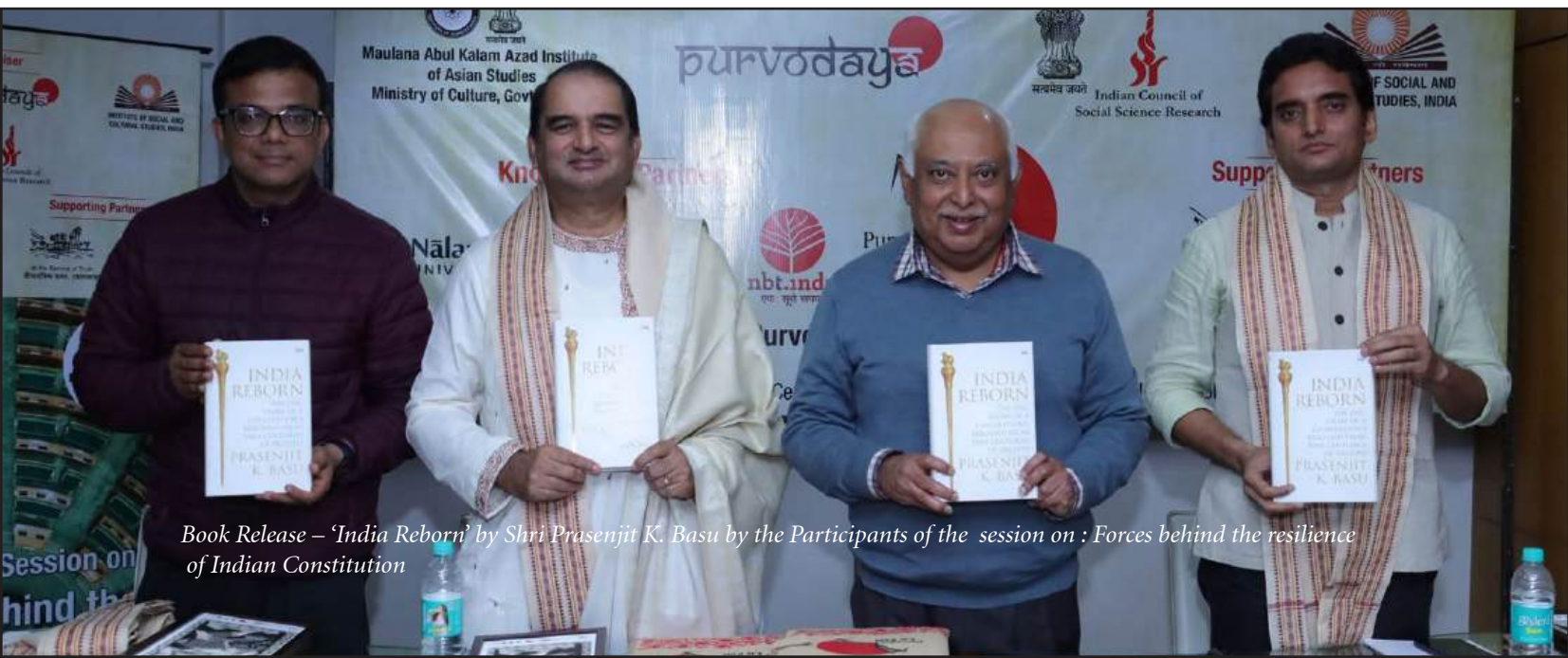
Performance – Chhau Dance

Day– 3, 26th November 2025

The Day 3 of the Lit Fest which was 26th November is celebrated as the Samvidhan Divas or Constitution Day. Hence keeping the perspective in mind the events throughout the day were curated.

Interactive Session : The session started with the release of the book *India Reborn: The Epic Story of Civilizations Rebound from Two Centuries of Decline* by the author Shri Prasenjit Basu himself. The author spoke about how his ideas are bounded in the book giving an insight of the country's dynamic policy system and bold reforms in stringing agriculture, labour, investment and innovation together, that has enabled the country to tide out challenges and preserve an inter-sectoral harmony. Similarly Dr. Sajjan Kumar, speaker from Bihar who himself is a policy analyst, brought about the country's timely intervention mechanisms, focusing on decentralization approach and policy matrix that enabled the country to usher consistent progress. The Third Speaker, Shri Abhijit Deb, eminent columnist and Writer from Tripura highlighted the versatility of our constitution that has helped the country to set the balance between the traditional and modern approach of development and progress.

The session also received participation of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court, H.E. Shri Biswanath Somadder, who manifested the role of judicial framework that in parlance to our legislation has stimulated participatory democracy and dynamic growth approach. Judiciary that remains independent of influence has played a vital role in participatory democracy. The Seventh and Eleventh Schedules of the constitution remain as exemplary examples to many other countries in stimulating a very interactive and accommodating constitutional arrangements altogether.



Book Release – 'India Reborn' by Shri Prasenjit K. Basu by the Participants of the session on : Forces behind the resilience of Indian Constitution



Participants of Sit and Draw Competition

Competition : The Sit and Draw Competition was organized on the 3rd day of the second Purvodaya Literary Festival, 26th November, at the Abanindranath Gallery of the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR). We witnessed an overwhelming participation from students of New Horizon School, Dolna Day School, Heritage School, and a student from G.S.M. School for (Boys), Taki House, and a student from Creative Garden Academy. The Sit and Draw Competition was held at the Abanindranath Gallery of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) from 11:00 am onwards. Other logistical and technical assistance was provided by ISCS. The Esteemed panel of judges for this competition comprised Shri Gautam Chakraborty, an eminent artist and Shri Bappa Bhowmik, an artist at Lalit Kala Academy.

Cultural Event: 26th November – A drama based on the life and works of Rashbehari Bose was staged by the theatre group – Sovabazar Protibimbo on day three of the fest. The theatre was written by Sumantra Chattopadhyay and was directed by Charnak Chattopadhyay. The production portrayed the vibrant, untamed life of a freedom fighter who still burns like a hidden flame in the nation's heart.



The Life and Works of Rashbehari Bose was staged by Sovabazar Protibimbo on 3rd Day of the fest



Day 4, 27th November, 2025 – Noble Peace Prize Day. A very interesting session was staged as a part of the Purvodaya Lit Fest, edition-II that discussed about the global peace and literature and especially denoted about the Indian fundament and role in facilitating peace, harmony also preserving the notion of human rights.

Interactive Session : The Interactive Session focussed on Global Peace and Literature. Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi – Hon’ble Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University presented his views on the necessity of restoring peace and harmony not only for individual progress but also setting pathway for development and achieving goals of Vikshit Bharat by 2047. Swami Vedatitananda Maharaj, from Ramkrishna Mission Shilpamandir, Belur Math, emphasized on how our Indian tradition, its philosophy has sustainably pursued the element of ensuring peace in oneself as

Signing of the MOU: Memorandum of Understanding was signed between The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and University of Nalanda on 27th November, 2025. The official course of actions was undertaken by Shri Arindam Mukhejee, Director, ISCS and Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi – Hon’ble Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University.

well as in societal context. The aspect of how India, its cultural variances, traditional subjective context, Vedas, Upanishads remained instrumental in influencing other parts of the world about the peace prospects was identified through the deliberations of two international speakers, Dr. Ilya Tarkan, Lecturer, Department of Social Science and Humanistic, Belarusian State Pedagogical University and Dr. Marcis Gasuns who himself is a multilingual linguist and a Sanskrit Scholar who has translated Bhagwad Gita in Russian language.



From Left : Dr. Marcis Gasuns, Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Swami Vedatitananda Maharaj, Dr. Ilya Tarkan

Competition : On the fourth day, 27th November of the second Purvodaya Literary Festival, the Poster Making Competition was organized at the Abanindranath Gallery of the Rabindranath Tagore

Centre, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) from 11:00 am onwards. The Competition was opened to participants of classes eight to twelve. The topic for the Poster Making Competition was Global Peace.



Participants at the Poster Making Competition



Receiving of Prizes and Certificate of the Poster Making Competition

Day – 5th, 25th November 2025

The Purvodaya Lit Fest on its final day started with a very important discourse – Bharatiya Bhasha Pariwar; the aim and objective behind this discourse of promoting scholarly dialogue on India's indigenous linguistic heritage and strengthening awareness about the interconnectedness of Bharatiya Bhāshāyein. The conference brought together academicians, linguists, educators, and language enthusiasts from across the country to deliberate on the historical, cultural, and academic foundations of the Bharatiya Bhasha Pariwar framework. The

discourse was participated by Prof. Naresh Annem, Professor, Centre for Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, Prof. Kusha Tiwari, Professor, Department of English, ShyamLal College, University of Delhi, Dr. P. Phani Krishna, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi and National Coordinator, Bharatiya Bhasha Pariwar, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, Ministry of Education, Dr. Shiva Ram Male, Assistant Professor, Centre for Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, Dr. Purnendu Bikash Debnath, Academic Consultant, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, Ministry of Education.



From Left : Prof. Tapas Chakraborty, Dr. Shyama Rath, Dr. V. Ramanathan

Interactive Session : As the fest bestowed the trend of marking and deliberating the significance of each of the days of the five days lit fest, similarly the last day too did not differ and shared the significance of the science and literature as 28th November, is commemorated worldwide as the Red Planet Day. Dr. Shyama Rath, Member Secretary, AICTE, Prof. Tapas Chakraborty, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology (MAKAUT) and Dr. V. Ramanathan, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Head of Excellence in Indian Knowledge System, Benaras Hindu University took a major initiative to discuss how AI and technology also mark their emphasis in the field of literature.



Participants of the Recitation Competition

Competition 1: On the last and final day, 28th November of the second Purvodaya Literary Festival, a recitation competition was held at the Fountain Court of the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) from 1:00 pm onwards. The Competition was opened to participants of classes eight to twelve. The topic for the competition was Poets of Eastern India, namely comprising these eight states (Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Tripura, Assam, Sikkim, Eastern U.P.).

Students from St. John Diocesan Higher Secondary School, New Horizon School, Dolna Day School, and a student from Techno India Group Public School also participated. Smt. Bijoylakshmi Barman, a reciter of repute, served as an esteemed judge for the event.

Competition 2: Purvodaya Literary Festival organized a Nukkad Natak competition, catering to college students, on 28th November at the Sculptor Court of the Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), from 3:00 pm



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute
of Asian Studies
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

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Purvodaya



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पुस्तक प्रसारण आया समिति
Pustak Prasarana Bhasha Samiti



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Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Indian Coun





INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA



onwards. This event saw enthusiastic participation from Lady Brabourne College, Shri Shikshayatan College, Amity University, Gokhale Memorial Girls College, and Vidyasagar Metropolitan College. All the participants performed their plays with exuberance and panache, delivering a very relevant social message through their plays.

Cultural Event : On the final day a classical concert by Abraham Mazumdar Academy of Music enthralled the audience with his mellifluous performance paying tribute to legends from Eastern India from Tagore to European Maestros and finally playing Satyajit Ray. The audience was enthralled with his mesmerizing rendition by Maestro himself and his fellow troupe members.



Performance by Abraham Mazumdar Academy of Music on concluding day of the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest

Other Attractions

Book Fair

The Purvodaya Lit Fest, Edition-II also organized a Book Fair in parallel to the main event to acquaint speakers with its diverse range of publications and interesting set of memorabilia's. Along with ISCS there were other organizations like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Sri Aurobindo

Bhavan, Kolkata and Bhartiya Bhasha Samiti. The Book Fair was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal on 24th of November itself. As we all know that the Hon'ble Governor is also a literary enthusiast and has written and edited books in different languages and some of his books were also displayed as a part of the book fair.



H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose inaugurating the Book Fair at the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest

Exhibition

“The Indonesian Odyssey of Rabindranath Tagore” curated by Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose, Hon’ble Governor of West Bengal and Shri Mahesh Saharia, Hony. Consul, Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia on Day 1 of the Fest, i.e., 24th November,

2025. The exhibition revealed numerous documents pertaining to Tagore’s visits along with his associates to South East Asia which includes Java in 1927. The exhibition aimed at providing an overview of Rabindranath Tagore’s historical visit to Indonesia which served as a paradigm of cultural exchanges between India and Indonesia.



Floral tribute to Rabindranath Tagore by H. E. Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose – Hon’ble Governor of West Bengal and Shri Mahesh Saharia, Hony. Consul, Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia



The exhibitions showcasing the 'Indonesian Odyssey of Rabindranath Tagore', curated by Arindam Mukherjee, and Purvodaya Litpex: A Philatelic Exhibition on Literature by Babul Dey, were inaugurated by the Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose. Guest of honour was the Honorary Consul General of Indonesia to Kolkata Shri Mahesh Saharia



Hon'ble Governor and other dignitaries viewing the exhibition

Pater Gaan

For centuries the singing scroll painters or the Patuas of Bengal have walked from village to village singing moral and mythological stories, using as an illustrative aid, painted scrolls known as Patachitras.

Their art of storytelling, painting and singing all rolled into one. Composing the lyrics and tunes themselves, these wandering bards sought alms from their rural audience, while playing the dual role of mobile entertainer and social reformer.



Presentation of Pater Gaan during the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest

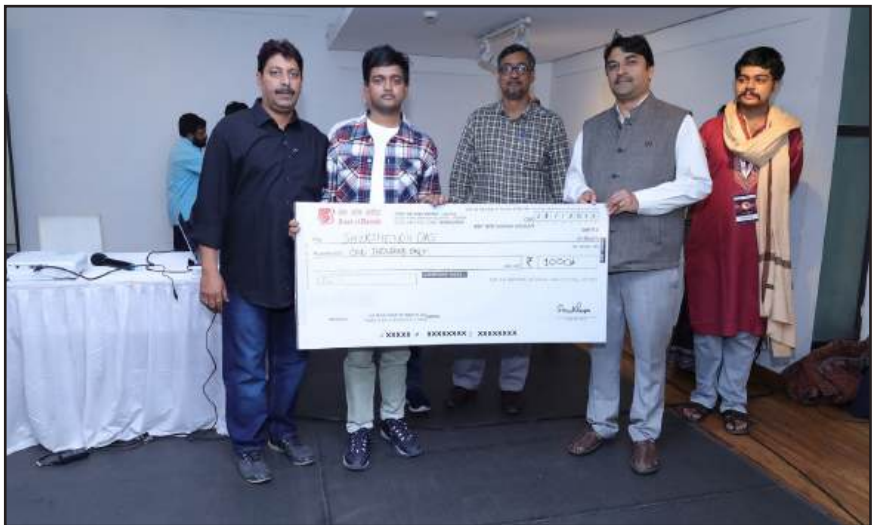
4. Photography Workshop

A photography workshop was organized for all five days by Fotounit. As the workshop gained immense success and interest since last year, therefore this time too this workshop was organized at the

Abanindranath Gallery every day between 2 to 3 pm. The workshop with over hundred participants across the age group turned out to be a real successful one. Participants were taught about the intricacies of photography and were also given assignments.



Five Days of Photography Workshop by Fotounit at the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest



Presentation of Prize and Certificates of the Photography Workshop at the Second Purvodaya Lit Fest

BANGLA STUDIES

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Celebration of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar at His Birth Sesquicentenary

28th March, 2026 | Sri Aurobindo Bhavan

Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar a pivotal figure in Bengali children literature. A writer, folklorist, and composer of rhymes, he made an invaluable contribution in preserving the rich oral storytelling traditions of Bengal. Born in 1877 in undivided Bengal, his works continues to shape the cultural imagination of generations even today.

The programme got initiated with the inauguration of an exhibition displaying books and memorabilia associated with the author, curated by Kolkata Koto Kotha. Simultaneously wood-carving workshop led by the artist Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya also got inaugurated. One of the main attractions of the porogramme was the Sit and Draw competition for school students inspired by illustrations from Thakurmar Jhuli. This competition saw students coming from more than ten different schools. In the competition Sudeshna Maity and Subhro Mondol of Sri Aurobindo Vidya Bhavan and Mohit Sarkar of Dakhin Kalikata Sevasram stood first second and

দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের সার্থশতবর্ষ উদযাপন

সূচী,
বাংলা শিশুসাহিত্যের ধারায় সর্বকালের অন্যতম শ্রেষ্ঠ নাম দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার। লোকসাহিত্যের সংগ্রাহক, ছড়াকার, এবং কিশোর কথাকার হিসেবেও দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার বিশেষ অবদান রেখে গেছেন। তার জন্মের সার্থশতবর্ষ পূর্তি উপলক্ষে শ্রীঅরবিন্দ ভবন, কলকাতা এবং ইনস্টিটিউট অব সোশ্যাল এন্ড কলচারাল স্টাডিস যৌথভাবে 'জন্ম সার্থশতবর্ষে দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার' শীর্ষক একটি অর্ধদিবসব্যাপী অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করতে চলেছে।

তারিখ: ২৮.৩.২০২৬ (শনিবার) সময়: বিকেল ৪ থেকে রাত্রি ৮
স্থান: শ্রীঅরবিন্দ ভবন, কলকাতা

- অনুষ্ঠানে প্রদর্শিত হবে দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের সম্পর্কিত নানান সামগ্রী এবং সঙ্গে পুরনো দিনের কঠি খেলাইয়ের বিভিন্ন সরঞ্জাম ও নমুনা।
- জ্যোতির্ময় ভট্টাচার্যের উপস্থাপনার কঠি বোনাই ওয়ার্কশপ।
- ঠাকুরমা বুলি গুজক নিয়ে স্কুল শিক্ষার্থীদের বাসে অটো প্রতियোগিতা।
- 'জন্ম সার্থশতবর্ষে দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের সাহিত্যের প্রাসঙ্গিকতা' শীর্ষক আলোচনা সভা। যেখানে বক্তব্য রাখবেন ড. শৈলেন্দ্র লাহা বিশিষ্ট লেখক শ্রী পাথজিৎ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, শ্রী জয়দীপ চক্রবর্তী ও অধ্যাপক সুনিতা চক্রবর্তী।

এই অনুষ্ঠানে অংশনার মাধ্যমে ও-গার্হস্থ্যিত আমবা-একান্ত-আবে কামনা করি।

অধিষ্ঠান মুখার্জি
ক্রিয়েটিভ
ইনস্টিটিউট অব
সোশ্যাল এন্ড কলচারাল স্টাডিস

শ্রী অরবিন্দ ভবন, কলকাতা
প্রতি
শ্রীঅরবিন্দ ভবন, কলকাতা

দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের সার্থশতবর্ষ উপলক্ষে অঙ্কন প্রতিযোগিতা

২৮.৩.২০২৬ (শনিবার) | সময়: দুপুর ৪-৫। শ্রীঅরবিন্দ ভবন, কলকাতা

প্রতিযোগিতার বিধি:
দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার রচিত বাংলা শিশুসাহিত্যের অমূল্য সম্পদ ঠাকুরমা বুলি ছবির পুরনো সংস্করণে অঙ্কিত উদ্ভাসিত অঙ্কন করে এই অঙ্কন প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করা হচ্ছে। অংশগ্রহণকারীরা ৫ বছর থেকে সোনা ছবি অঙ্কন বা সেই ছবিতে মেয়ে অঙ্কনিত করে নতুনভাবে ছবি আঁকতে পারবে।

অংশগ্রহণের বিধানাবলী:

১. প্রতিযোগিতায় শুধুমাত্র স্কুলের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে। (পঞ্চম থেকে দশম শ্রেণী)।
২. অংশগ্রহণকারীদের নির্দিষ্ট স্থানে উপস্থিত হতে হবে। প্রতিযোগিতার আগে নিতে হবে।
৩. অংশগ্রহণকারীদের সঙ্গে থেকে অঙ্কন করার নির্দিষ্ট কার্ড প্রদান করা হবে।
৪. প্রতিযোগিতার আঁকার সামগ্রী (কলম, শার্পেন, ক্রেশ, রঙিন পেনসিল ইত্যাদি) সঙ্গে করে আনতে হবে।
৫. প্রতিযোগিতার নির্দিষ্ট ১ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে সম্পূর্ণ করতে হবে।
৬. প্রতিটি ছবিতে ছবিতে অংশগ্রহণকারীর নাম, স্কুলের নাম ও শ্রেণী উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
৭. নিয়মিত অঙ্কন বিষয়ে প্রশ্নের ক্ষেত্রে প্রশ্ন করা হবে।
৮. নির্ধারিত সেরা উদ্ভাসিত অঙ্কন করা হবে এবং প্রয়োজনে প্রশঙ্গীর ব্যবস্থা করা হবে।
৯. অংশগ্রহণ অর্ধপূর্ণা প্রতিযোগিতার সময়ে, ছাত্র ও শিক্ষক পরিচয় করে অঙ্কন করা করতে হবে।
১০. অংশগ্রহণকারী যখন প্রতিযোগিতার প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণ করবে শংসাপত্র প্রদান করা হবে।

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, in collaboration with The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies organized a half-day event titled Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar at His Birth Sesquicentenary on March 28, 2026, to celebrate his enduring legacy and contributions in Bengali literature.

third respectively in the senior section. In the junior section, Angshika Chowdhury of Rishi Aurobindo Memorial Academy, Priyadarshini Roy of The New Horizon High School and Roonica Chowdhury of Sakhawat Memorial Govt Girls High School stood first, second, third respectively. Beside this, Sanjana Bhunia, Aditya Roy and Ankita Mallick received special prizes for their art work.

The main attraction of the event was a discussion session titled “The Relevance of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder’s Literature in His birth Sesquicentenary” took place featuring eminent writers like Sri Parthaajit Gangopadhyay and Sri Jaydeep Chakraborty, as well as academicians like Professor Sumita Chakraborty and Dr. Sailendra Laha.



Sri Parthaajit Gangopadhyay



Professor Sumita Chakraborty



Sri Biswajit Ganguly

The discussion session commenced with an address by Sri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee of Sri Aurobindo Bhavan. In his deliverance, he highlighted how eminent personalities such as Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore had praised Thakurmar Jhuli, the celebrated work of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar. He emphasized the enduring significance of children’s literature, noting its wide appeal and the important role it plays in shaping imagination and values. He also referred to the contributions of The Mother (Sri Maa), highlighting her extensive writings on children’s literature and education.



Dr. Sailendra Laha



Drawing Competition

He thereafter requested Dr. Sailendra Laha to present his views. Dr Laha, discussed extensively about Mother (Sri Maa's) writings on Children's Literature and education, highlighting how they positively impacted the children.

Dr Laha's speech was followed by eminent author Sri Parthajit Gangopadhyay. He initiated his discussion praising ISCS and SriAurobindo Bhavan for organizing such a programme. He said about the

significance of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar in children psychology. He briefly spoke about the concept of Rupkatha(folk tales). Sri Gangopadhyay elaborated on Dakshinaranjan's tireless efforts in collectingRupkathas(folktales) fromtheerstwhileEast Bengal and modern Bangladesh. He also mentioned the crucial role played by Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen and Rabindranath Tagore helping Dhakinaranjan to publish Thakumar Jhuli. While Dr. Sen persuaded the



Drawing Competition Prize winners

publishers to publish Dakshinaranjan's manuscripts, Tagore wrote a wonderful introductory note for his book mentioning how this book reflected the rich cultural heritage of the nation. Sri Gangopadhyay thereafter spoke on the literary technique and the vast array of literature written by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar also noting how it inspired people like Sri Upendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury to write stories based on Rupkatha (folk tales).

The next speaker Prof. Sumita Chakraborty in her detailed discourse mentioned about the diverse literary contributions of Sri Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, which included compilation of Swadeshi song and publication like Arya Samaj, Sahaj Chandi etc. She also mentioned how Shri Mitra Mazumder translated folklore of foreign nations into Bengali. She thereafter spoke on how Takurmar Jhuli became synonymous to the national pride of the country as it reflected the rich cultural heritage of the nation that its people feel proud about. She added that Thakurmar Jhuli being published during the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal in 1907 became somewhat of a flag bearer of our old traditional values deeply rooted in our indigenous culture and in a way, resurrected Bengali folk tales from obvious oblivion.

The last speaker of the session was eminent author Sri Joydeep Chakraborty. In his speech he mentioned about the multifaceted aspect of Dakshinaranjan's literature. He pointed out that although children's literature has often been undervalued in Bengali literary tradition, Dakshinaranjan chose it as his primary field of work. He also highlighted the challenges Dakshinaranjan faced while establishing himself in this domain.

Sri Joydeep Chakraborty further addressed the issue of gender representation in Dakshinaranjan's works. He noted that in Mitra Mazumder's works male protagonists are typically depicted as heroic and courageous, while female characters are often portrayed in supportive or submissive roles. For example, princesses are usually shown as needing rescue, whereas princes are presented as strong saviours. According to Chakraborty, such traditional portrayals have drawn criticism and dissatisfaction from women readers.

He concluded by reflecting on the continued relevance of Thakurmar Jhuli in the contemporary era.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks from Sri Biswajit Ganguly, Trustee Aurobindo Bhavan where he thanked the speakers, the audience and the organizers for organizing such a programme.



Bookshelf Counter



Exhibition

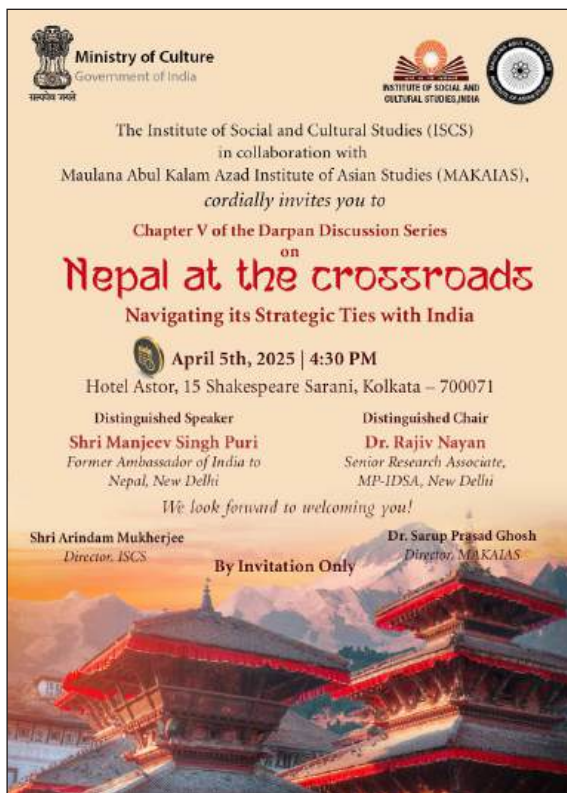
DARPAN



Darpan Discussion Series (Chapter V) on **Nepal at the Crossroads Navigating its Strategic Ties with India**

April 5th, 2025 | Hotel Astor, Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies in collaboration with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies organized Chapter V of Darpan Discussion Series “Nepal at the Crossroads: Navigating its Strategic Ties with India” on 5th April, 2025 from 4.30 pm onwards.



The Darpan series that is been designed by the institute aims to reciprocate the dynamics of geopolitics surrounding nations boundaries having an implicit impact on the trade, economy, security measures and sustainability issues. The Chapter Vth elucidated the trends of India-Nepal relations,



Amb. Shri Manjeev Singh Puri

countries that are compounded with commonalities in terms of culture, religion and spiritual aspects and also complement each other as growth partners through P to P and B to B reciprocation.

The event did adhere to Chatham House guide lines, but the interesting features were surfaced through the interaction among the participants that includes Dr. Rajiv Nayan – Senior Research Associate, MP-IDSA, New Delhi who addressed the event as a Chairperson and Shri Manjeev Singh Puri, Former Ambassador of India to Nepal, New Delhi who as a Distinguished Speaker took a front seat taking audience actually through the cross roads, eliciting braided history, cultural and kinship ties, economic cooperation and developmental pragmatism synergizing the growth process of two countries along with present interruption caused by the interference of countries who are at the race of acting and proclaiming themselves as Asian Supremo.

The event marked its conclusion through interesting round of interactions among the speakers and the present audience.

SUDHI SANGAM



Sudhi Sangam-XI

10th May, 2025 | Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) on May 10th organized its XIth Chapter of Sudhi Sangam, the series of lectures which focuses on the contributions of the eminent personalities in multi-dimensional fields. Shri Barid Baran Ghosh, former President of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad as a speaker for the said chapter unfurled his multitude of experience of being surrounded with enriched people and stalwarts of literary field.

The Talk started with a Welcome Address of Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS who manifested

the importance of such consortiums in the present day. As being harboured in a technical oriented world, the generation at present remains completely curtailed with the importance and essence of literature and iconic authors who played a magnificent role in manoeuvring realities of world, politics, state and culture for the common people.

The veteran speaker of the event while summarising his life time experience rewind back to his rural roots of Bengal as his childhood stretched in the landscape of Bolpur, Birbhum known not only for its red soil and the shallow serpentine rivers ridden with sand islands, but also for the notable poets. Yet a gateway to the cultural diadem Shantiniketan. The unique mix of literature, poetry, world renowned entities which the region surrounded with played a major role in cultivating love, fascination and aspiration to become a writer for Shri Barid Baran Ghosh.

In his address he mentioned Bridul Shekhar Shastri, Khitimohan Shastri, Suniti Pathak and many more who had served the speaker as a source of an inspiration and initiated his walk and journey on a broader sense in the literary world altogether.

On the course of his journey as a writer and later as a President of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad he shared his experiences saying that in today's time students due to extensiveness of education, aspiration of seeking a good job diminishes their interest towards pursuing literature or the rich repository of literature that Bangla remains compounded with.

The aspiration towards attaining a good job reduces interests of young students towards perusal of Bangla literature, which in the long run can become a threat as the rich legacy of poets and canopy of their ideas





Shri Barid Baran Ghosh

would slowly become tarnished. He applauded the institute's initiative of bringing out such a vibrant range of publication in Bangla language, written in simpler tone, paper packs instead of voluminous compilation would actually be a catalyst of bringing back interest and reengaging young writers to define their ideas in Bangla.

The event featured a question and answer session between the speaker and the audience regarding the evolving trends in Bangla literature, which was also

forecasting its future. He emphasized the significance of digital publications and archives as crucial tools for expanding the reach of literary collections, breaking down the barriers of time and distance.

The interesting evening with an engaging discussion marked its conclusion with a vote of thanks and a promise by the institute member to return soon with yet interesting sessions, contemporary dimensions for its supporters and followers.



Interaction between speakers and the audience



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

THU

THU

FRI

FRI

18

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1

SAT

2

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9

31

30

Manthan 2


Upcoming Census in India: its Needs and Concern

28th June, 2025 | ISCS's Interactive Zone – Kolkata



Manthan : 2
Interactive Session on
UPCOMING CENSUS IN INDIA :
ITS NEEDS AND CONCERNS
28th June 2025; 5.30 pm

Speaker
Professor Biswanath Chakraborty
*Department of Political Science,
Rabindra Bharati University*



INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA



ISCS Central Office,
46A, Jatin Das Road,
Kolkata- 700029

The Census in India represents a thorough process of gathering, compiling, and analyzing demographic, social, economic, and other relevant data concerning the nation's population. Conducted every decade, it yields essential information for governmental planning, policy formulation, and resource distribution. Recently, the Indian government has officially sanctioned the inclusion of caste enumeration in the forthcoming national census—marking a first since the nation gained

independence. Against this background, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies has organized an academic discussion on this topic titled “Upcoming Census in India: its Needs and Concern.” Moderated by Shri Sourav Roy, Additional Secretary of the Eastern Command, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, the event featured an esteemed speaker in the form of Professor Biswanath Chakraborty from the Department of Political Science at Rabindra Bharati University, who provided insights on this matter. The



(L-R) Shri Sourav Roy, Prof, Biswanath Chakraborty, Prof. Arindam Mukherjee

programme followed the Chatham House principle. The programme was commenced by the honourable Director of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Shri Arindam Mukherjee who felicitated the speaker and the honourable chair for the evening

before proceeding on to the main discussion session. The discussion captured about the history of the Census in India since the colonial times till present before proceeding on to the challenges and the concerns of conducting caste census in India.



The participants at the discussion

National Panel Discussion on Energy Security and Stability in the Bay of Bengal: An Eastern Indian Perspective

30th July, 2025 | Hotel Astor, Kolkata

The increasing importance of energy security and stability in the Bay of Bengal arises from its strategic position, rich energy resources, and vital role in global energy flows. In recent years, we have observed a growing involvement of global powers, often motivated by energy security objectives,



geopolitical rivalry, and maritime supremacy in the region. Ensuring stability for their energy security in this maritime area has become a crucial priority for the countries bordering the Bay of Bengal, particularly India and in this context, the importance of India's eastern region in ensuring the

nation's energy security is crucial. Taking this into account, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, which has devoted more than ten years in academic discussions and research on different aspects of the Bay of Bengal region, held a panel deliberation in collaboration with the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies over this issue titled "Energy Security and Stability in the Bay of Bengal: An Eastern Indian Perspective," which took place on July 30, 2025, at The Astor, Kolkata -71. Chaired by Dr. Rajiv Nayan, Senior Research Associate at the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses, the event featured distinguished speakers including Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Singh, Chief of Energy Security at the Confederation of Indian Industry, CDR (retd.) Dr. Vijay Sakhuja, a former Navy Officer and Professor & Head of the Centre of Excellence for Geo-Politics at Reva University, and Dr. Dipankar Sengupta, Professor in the Department of Economics at Jammu University.

The program commenced with the Master of Ceremonies, Miss Kankana Roy, inviting the Director of ISCS, Shri Arindam Mukherjee, and the Director of MAKAIAS, Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, to honour the chair and the esteemed speakers.

Following the felicitation, the chair of the panel discussion Dr. Rajiv Nayan initiated his introductory note by discussing the evolution of security as a concept. He thereafter spoke briefly on energy security which he commented did not have a single definition. He commented that at present energy security has emerged as one of the most significant nontraditional security issue in academic deliberation. Subsequently he highlighted the strategic significance of Bay of Bengal within the context of global security



Dr. Vijay Sakhujia

discourse. He hoped for the speakers of the session to discuss the role of BIMSTEC in the region, whether general global energy security discourse is relevant regarding the security of Bay of Bengal and assess the implications of the competition for controlling critical rare earth materials for renewable energy production in this region. After concluding his remarks he invited Dr. Bhupendra Kumar to place his deliberation.

Professor Kumar commenced his discussion by elucidating the fundamental concept of energy security. In his data-driven presentation, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar articulated how India's economic growth is intricately linked to its primary energy consumption. By referencing the Bay of Bengal as a Centre for oil, gas, and the blue economy, he underscored the importance of this region in meeting India's energy demands. Throughout his

discourse, supported by pertinent statistics, he illustrated the energy landscape of eastern India. Additionally, the speaker addressed the potential challenges India may encounter concerning energy security and deliberated on the strategies that should be implemented to bolster the country's energy security.

The subsequent speaker, Dr. Vijay Sakhujia, commenced his discussion by addressing the security situation in the Bay of Bengal. He stated that when analyzing this region, one must adopt a rational approach. He referred to the historical maritime connections between India and other countries bordering the Bay of Bengal. He elaborated on critical issues such as energy resources in the Bay of Bengal, the economic and strategic importance of this region, the relevance of the Setu Samudram and Kra canal projects, the increasing Chinese surveillance in the Bay of Bengal, the rising number of Chinese-flagged fishing vessels within India's exclusive economic zone, and the escalating ecological threats in this region. He briefly discussed the strategic measures implemented by India to counter the security challenges it encounters in the area. Thereupon in his presentation he threw light on the growing bilateral relationship between Turkey and Bangladesh and its implications in the region. His presentation also touched on the possible effects of the US tariff imposition on Bangladesh and Myanmar.



(L-R) Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Dr. Rajib Nayan, Dr. Vijay Sakhujia, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Singh, Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Dr. Dipankar Sengupta

In his final remark he mentioned the Bay of Bengal as a sea of collective destiny. He opined that as energy infrastructure will grow, it would attract safety and security concerns. He mentioned that in addition to US engagement in Bay affairs under President Trump still unfolding and China's Strategic ambitions in the region loom large along with Turkish activism in the region raising security concern in the context of regional stability, the region seems to be mired in geo-economics and geopolitical contestation.

The last speaker of the session Dr. Dipankar Sengupta initiated his discussion by mentioning about how price as a factor is important in energy security. He stated how geo-politics, climate change impact the variability of the price of energy production and adversely affect energy security.

He noted that while energy security is typically assessed from a hydrocarbon-centric perspective in the context of India, this viewpoint appears to be inadequate given that the country's energy production is still heavily reliant on coal. He emphasized the importance of coal in relation to the Bay of Bengal, as India currently imports coal from Indonesia and Australia via the Malacca Strait. He warned that any obstruction of the Malacca Strait could severely disrupt India's coal supply, thereby increasing the demand for hydrocarbons from Middle Eastern nations.

Subsequently, he discussed the potential for military actions in the Bay of Bengal to impact coal supplies to India, particularly from China, which he currently deemed to be a negligible threat, although the possibility still exists. He further addressed how climate change and disasters in eastern India could affect coal supply and, consequently, India's energy security. Additionally, he pointed out that China could, through non-military means such as increasing its coal demand from Indonesia, disrupt coal supplies to India.

In his address, he expressed skepticism regarding the substantial deposits of hydrocarbons in the Bay of Bengal region and advocated for the development and enhancement of infrastructure in eastern India to accommodate greater coal supply. He stressed the need for prompt and efficient responses to climate change when it occurs so that it does not disrupt coal supply and encouraged the exploration of alternative renewable energy sources.

Following the discussions the floor was made open and the audiences were invited to pose questions and share comments. Numerous remarks were made and questions were placed which were satisfactorily addressed by the distinguished speakers.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the Director of The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Shri Arindam Mukherjee.



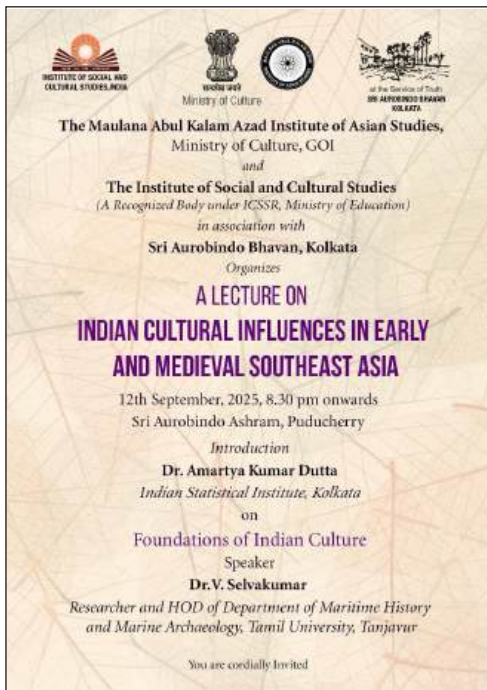
Panellist and Participants of the Seminar

Talk on Cultural Spread of Bharat in South East Asia

12th September, 2025 | Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry

India-South East Asia relations highlight one of the most remarkable civilizational exchanges in human history. Through peaceful means such as trade, maritime voyages, scholarly exchanges and the movement of monks and artisans, Indian culture took root across vast regions of Southeast Asia. Taking this into context, The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian

Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. In his speech Professor Dutta discussed in details the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo's views on spiritual evolution, transformation of human consciousness and the



Studies collaborated to organize a lecture titled “Cultural Spread of Bharat in South East Asia” at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry on 12th September, 2025 from 8:30 PM onwards.

The lecture commenced with the introductory note given by Professor Amartya Dutta from



ultimate realization of divine life on earth.

The introductory note was followed by the key address delivered by Dr. V. Selvakumara, Professor from Department of Maritime History and Marine Archaeology at Tamil University, Thanjavur who spoke on the topic of Indian Cultural Influences in Southeast Asia. He started his deliberation by tracing the interaction between India and Southeast Asia since prehistoric period. He said that since the early historic times, Indian cultural interaction has been evident in South East Asia, with Indian craftsmen, traders, and Brahmin priests visiting the Southeast Asian countries, contributing to religious and cultural exchanges. He mentioned how the Sanskrit inscriptions and Pallavagranta script reveal the extensive dissemination of Indian knowledge traditions across Southeast Asia. He noted that Buddhism was one of the important

factors facilitating early interactions between India and Southeast Asia. He thereafter mentioned how architectural edifices of stupas and chaityas were constructed across Southeast Asia influenced by Indian designs that in due course, evolved into a unique regional style through the process of modification and localization of these designs. He also addressed about the ancient maritime connectivity between India and Southeast Asia. Touching on the concept of Indianization as proposed by George Coédès, he mentioned that despite certain scholars questioning the validity or extent of the Indianization process, Indian influence remained profound in the socio-cultural milieu of Southeast Asia. Indian traditions, myths, epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana along with kavya literary traditions got assimilated and embraced in the cultural practices of Southeast Asia.

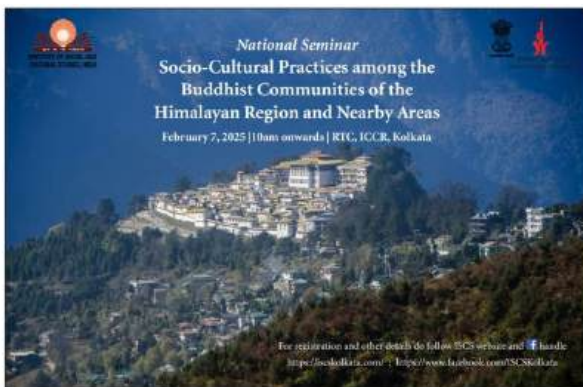


One-Day National Seminar on Socio-Cultural Practices among the Buddhist Communities of the Himalayan Region and Nearby Areas

7 February, 2026 | Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), Kolkata, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), organized a One-Day National Seminar on “Socio-Cultural Practices among the Buddhist Communities of the Himalayan Region and Nearby Areas” on 7 February, 2026 in Kolkata. The seminar was conducted as part of the ongoing ICSSR-sponsored project titled “Integral Socio-cultural Practices among Buddhist Communities in Borderland Regions: A Study in Sikkim and Selected districts of Arunachal Pradesh and North Bengal.”

The primary aim of the seminar was to facilitate scholarship that highlights the integral socio-cultural practices of Buddhist communities in the context of contemporary challenges such as globalization, geopolitics, tourism, and cultural transformations in borderland regions.



The seminar commenced with a Welcome Address by Shri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS, Kolkata. In his remarks, he emphasized the importance of studying Buddhist socio-cultural practices in India’s borderland regions, underlining how these

communities negotiate tradition and modernity amidst rapid socio-economic changes. He reiterated that such research is crucial for understanding cultural resilience and regional identity in sensitive geopolitical zones.

The Chief Guest, Prof. Vinay Kumar Rao (SCSNEI, Jawaharlal Nehru University), observed that Buddhism in India has not declined as often suggested in mainstream narratives. Instead, he argued that many Buddhist practices have fused with Hindu traditions, resulting in layered cultural continuities rather than disappearance. His address set the tone for rethinking the ‘decline’ thesis in Buddhist historiography.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Ven. Dr. Pooja Dabral, Assistant Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religions, Nalanda University. She highlighted the philosophical depth and lived dimensions of Buddhist practices, especially in Himalayan communities, and stressed their relevance in addressing ethical and ecological crises in contemporary times.

Session I, titled “Buddhism, its History and Contemporary Challenges: From Eastern and Northeastern India Perspectives,” was chaired by Prof. Vinay Kumar Rao. Prof. Projith Kumar Palit (Department of History, Assam University) discussed the historical trajectories of various Buddhist communities in Northeast India, with particular focus on Tripura. He traced their socio-political evolution. Dr. Jhumpa Mukherjee (Associate Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata) examined the ethical and political values embedded in Buddhist thoughts,



Speech by Chief Guest Prof. Vinay Kumar Rao, SCSNEI, JNU

drawing parallels with social contract theories. Dr. Avienaash E. P, Research Assistant, ISCS-ICSSR, argued that Buddhist practices in borderland regions are deeply embedded in regional histories and the lived experiences of marginalized communities. He suggested the need for an alternative analytical framework to move beyond simplistic ‘decline and revival’ narratives of Buddhism.

Session II, on “Buddhism: Its Importance in Socio-Cultural Trends and Towards Sustainable Living,” was chaired by Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata. Shri Raj Basu, Advisor (Rural Tourism & Homestay), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, spoke about state initiatives promoting sustainable tourism rooted in local Buddhist cultural



Keynote Address by Ven. Dr. Pooja Dabral, Assistant Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religions, Nalanda University



Speech by Prof. Projit Kumar Palit, Professor, Dept. of History, Assam University, Silchar, Assam

practices. Prof. Ujjwal Kumar (Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Calcutta) reflected on the Bodhi Tree as a symbolic and institutional centre of Buddhist thoughts, emphasizing sustainability as a core value. Dr. Ajanta Das, Research Associate, ICS-ICSSR, presented on performance art, folklore (Tai-Khamti community) and Buddhist festivals to demonstrate how ritual practices embody principles of ecological balance and community participation and the deep mingling of Buddhism with the

Buddhist community's life and culture.

The seminar concluded with a Valedictory Address by Prof. Alok Kumar Ghosh, Former Head, Department of History, University of Kalyani, Kolkata. He offered a comprehensive overview of the deliberations and appreciated the interdisciplinary approach adopted by the seminar. He underscored the importance of sustained research on Buddhist communities in India's Himalayan and borderland regions.



Speech by Dr. Jhumpa Mukherjee, HOD, Dept. of Political Science; Associate Professor, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata



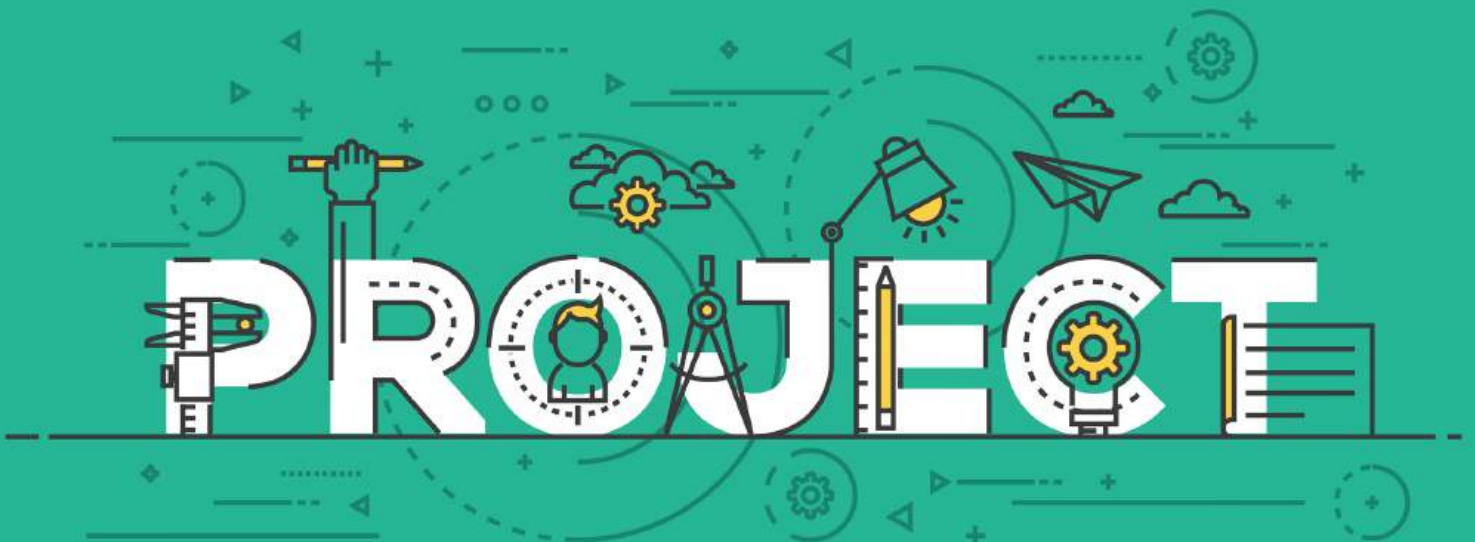
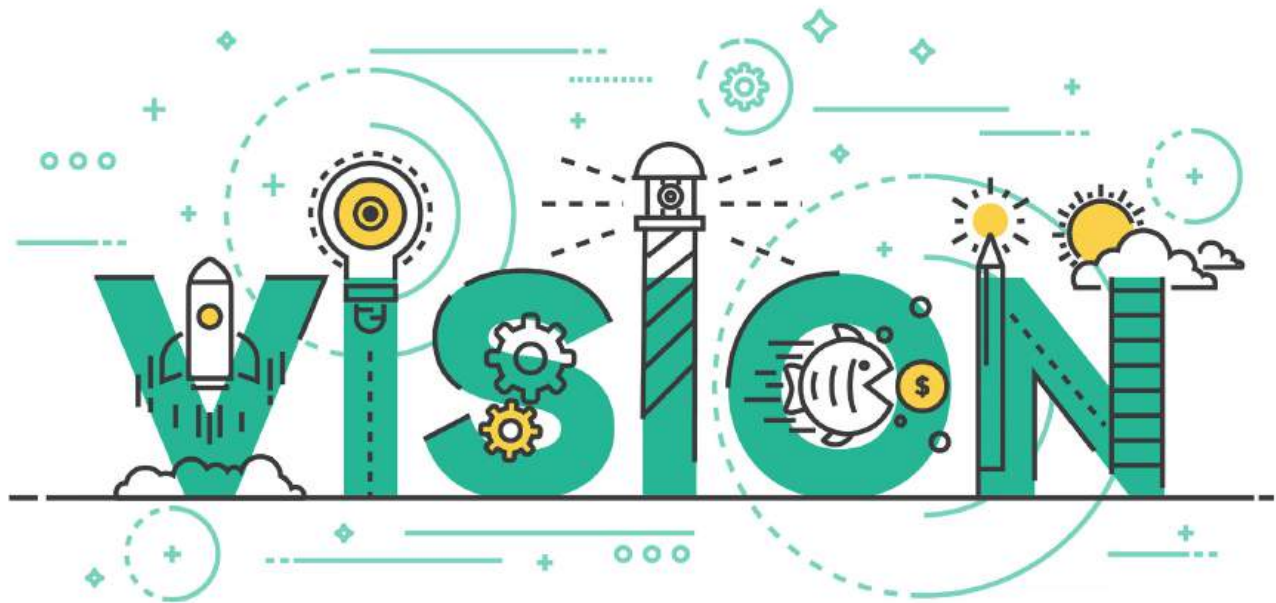
(L-R) Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh, Shri Raj Basu, Prof. Ujjwal Kumar, Dr. Ajanta Das



Participants of the Seminar



RESEARCH PROJECTS



Role of Digital Media in Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Study and Analysis (2021 to Present)

The Research project on the Role of Digital Media in Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Study and Analysis has been undertaken.



Integral Socio-cultural Practices among Buddhist Communities in Borderland Regions: A Study in Sikkim and Selected Districts of Arunachal Pradesh and North Bengal (March 2024 to March 2026)

This study explores the dynamic and enduring presence of Buddhism in the borderland regions of Northeast India and the Eastern Himalayas, focusing on Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and the northern part of West Bengal. While mainstream narratives of Indian Buddhism often emphasize its historical development in the Gangetic plains, this research shifts attention to the parallel evolution of “living Buddhism” in these geographically remote yet culturally vibrant regions. Situated along the Indo-Tibet (China-occupied), Indo-Bhutan, and Indo-Myanmar borders, these areas have historically functioned as important cultural corridors where Buddhist traditions interacted with indigenous belief systems, giving rise to distinctive socio-cultural formations.

Adopting an ethnographic and regionally grounded approach, the study examines diverse Buddhist communities, including the Tai-Khamti, Singpho, Tikhak-Tangsa, Monpa, Memba, Sherdukpen, Lepcha, Bhutia, Tamang, Sherpa, Gurung, and Dukpa. These groups inhabit varied ecological zones, ranging from the tropical plains of the Patkai hills to the high-altitude Himalayan regions. Environmental diversity plays a crucial role in shaping settlement patterns, economic activities, and religious practices, resulting in localized expressions of Buddhism that are deeply intertwined with ecological contexts.

A central focus of the research is the coexistence and interaction of two major Buddhist traditions: Theravada and Mahayana. Theravada Buddhism, primarily practiced in southeastern Arunachal



Ora dance, 41st Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi in Namgo village, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, February 2025

Pradesh, maintains strong historical and monastic links with Myanmar. In contrast, Mahayana Buddhism dominates the Himalayan regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and northern West Bengal, drawing heavily from Tibetan religious traditions. Within Mahayana, further diversification into schools such as Nyingma, Kagyu, Gelugpa, and Drukpa reflects a rich complexity of doctrinal and ritual practices across communities.

The study also traces the historical transmission of Buddhism through migration, trade, and monastic networks. Southeast Asian influences are evident among the Tai-Khamti and Singpho, while Tibetan Buddhist lineages shape the religious life of communities such as the Monpa, Memba, Lepcha, and Bhutia. A significant aspect of this research is its focus on syncretism, highlighting how Buddhist doctrines have blended with indigenous paganistic traditions. This is particularly visible among groups such as the Sherdukpen and Lepcha, where local cosmologies coexist alongside Buddhist philosophies, producing hybrid religious systems.

Beyond doctrinal aspects, the research investigates broader socio-cultural dimensions, including art, architecture, festivals, oral traditions, and material culture. Monasteries emerge as key institutions, serving not only as centers of spiritual practice but also as hubs of education, cultural preservation, and community organization. The roles of monks, ritual specialists, and local institutions are crucial in sustaining religious continuity amid changing socio-economic conditions.

The findings emphasize that Buddhism in these borderland regions is a vibrant and adaptive tradition rather than a static relic. Two major cultural corridors are identified: a Theravada corridor in southeastern Arunachal Pradesh with strong cross-border links to Myanmar, and a Mahayana heartland across western Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Northern West Bengal, shaped by Tibetan influences. Material culture reflects close environmental adaptation, from bamboo stilt houses in lowlands to stone structures in high-altitude areas, though modernization increasingly threatens traditional forms. Rising



Tikhak Tangsa war dance troupe in Panchoo Pass festival 2025

literacy and economic change have led younger generations to prioritize global and national languages over traditional religious education. Simultaneously, shifts toward government employment and tourism-driven economies are transforming local livelihoods and cultural landscapes.

Ultimately, the study underscores the resilience of these Buddhist communities while highlighting the need for development models that balance modernization with the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.



Daan Utsav observed in Nampong village Monastery, Nampong, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh in March 2025

Summer Internship programme

25th June – 19th July 2025

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, like the past six years, this year too initiated Summer School – An Internship programme for the undergraduates. The internship programme usually takes place to provide exposure to the young students about various aspects that they remain abate of as a part of their routing college curriculum.

Around 23 students from various esteemed academic organizations of Kolkata joined the proposed Summer School from 25th June to 19th July, 2025. The students were of undergraduate levels pursuing their signed up courses on Political Science, History and Sociology from St. Xavier's college, Kolkata, Jadavpur University, Adamas University and Scottish Church College.

The internship programme commemorated with an orientation session by the ISCS's administrative body member who discussed about the institutional fundamentals, features, thrust areas and drew their attention towards the internship itinerary. The next was their visit to National Library, Kolkata, to whom the institute remains grateful for sharing their valuable time and enabling an access to all the students to their rare section.

The visit centred primarily on the Bhasha Bhawan wing, a dedicated space celebrating India's linguistic diversity with publications in 22 official Indian languages. The library's vast holdings are organized across three key levels: an underground floor for English books, the middle-level Bhasha Bhawan for Indian languages, and a top-floor reading room for public and scholarly use. A highlight of the visit was exclusive access to the high-security vault, a meticulously Temperature controlled (18°C) environment safeguarding fragile, rare, and priceless texts. Among the treasures observed were



an early 1790 edition of Ramcharitmanas (noted for its Controversial print history), exquisite Mughal Era manuscripts, religious texts on calfskin, and Books adorned with natural dyes and gold ink. The interns also encountered a remarkable array of rare manuscripts and collections, including a miniature Bhagavad Gita, a collection of 300 hand-painted

images of historical Lahore, a Gita Saar Sangrah featuring 190 grams of gold, and a truly unique Quran in Gold with central lines in pure gold ink and three-meter calligraphic panels. Other significant artifacts included Hickey's Bengal Gazette (India's first English newspaper), 800–900-year-old Arabic manuscripts, and Traditional Tibetan Buddhist texts on wooden sheets. The pervasive presence of gold-ink Calligraphy across various religious and literary texts underscored the artistic reverence for Script.

The Bhasha Bhawan further showcased a wealth of multilingual and historic texts, such as an unamended copy of the Indian Constitution, the classical Tamil epic Kambaramayanam, and a Rare Assamese manuscript of the Skandapurana. Historical documents like the First Assamese Magazine on the Revolt of 1857, handwritten poems by Sarojini Naidu, and personal letters from Rabindranath Tagore offered profound glimpses into India's freedom struggle and Intellectual currents. Manuscripts of

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay and a dedicated section on Tagore and Vivekananda highlighted their contributions to spiritual nationalism and social reform.

The next was a discussion on the evolution of civil society and their importance in governance by Ms. Sohini Nayak, a policy analyst. She oriented them with the aspect of Civil Society concept of the Greek polis and agora, civil society as a product of the past, which saw in public reasoning and large scale discussion the base for its action. Therefore how the concept of civil society evolved over a period of time and has supported the state in its functioning, with a non-authoritative nature it has permeated to develop associations, leadership enabling people's participation in the process of decision making.

Students also made their visit to Regional Passport Office, Kolkata, as the organization remains center of various important aspects handling issues like migration dealing with citizenry issues. Students



Presentation by Student

were allocated tasks, where they were asked to develop certain tenets in terms of the infrastructural and operational approach which could be later suggested to bring in some improvement to enhance efficiency in the workforce.

The ISCS's internship not only promote learning but also prepare students for future workforce through inculcating attributes like cooperation and coordination. As students were from different institutions they were asked to make groups and through cooperative efforts develop group presentations on key issues like government policies, environmental approach, role of education etc. The presentations have been reviewed by an expert and they were given suggestions for further improvement. In today's time the role of Statement of Purpose (SOP) possess a very important role especially when they aspire to pursue their higher studies; in most of the cases the rejection in the application procedure entails due to inefficiency in the SOP. Thus a special class was conducted by Shri Soumik Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Bhowanipore Education Society who shared some special tips that could enable students to comprehend their SOP.

The main attraction of the Internship programme remains "Talk with The Diplomat"; this year it

remained even more special as the interns got a chance to directly interact with the Diplomat – Shri Ashish Mirdha, Director, Branch Secretariat, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Kolkata. In his discussion and deliberation, he shared experiences he had while serving and representing the country at other nations. He shared intricacies about his present responsibilities and also discussed about the way students should format their academic calendar, especially who aims to aspire for UPSC.

The last two days also remained vital for the students as they represented their ideates, learnings through an individual power point presentation. Students represented their ideas, subjects of their likings also taking up content from their internship learning as a part of their presentation topic. These students were guided and best four were also presented with hampers on the concluding day, when all of them were presented with their participation certificates.

The Summer Internship Programme, like always, remained extremely exciting and learning for both the students as well as the ISCS, R & D team who got acquainted with versatile ideas and expressions of these young bundle of students or the representers of Tomorrow's India!



Participants from various Academic Institutes at Internship Programme

BOOK RELEASE EVENTS AND BOOK FAIRS

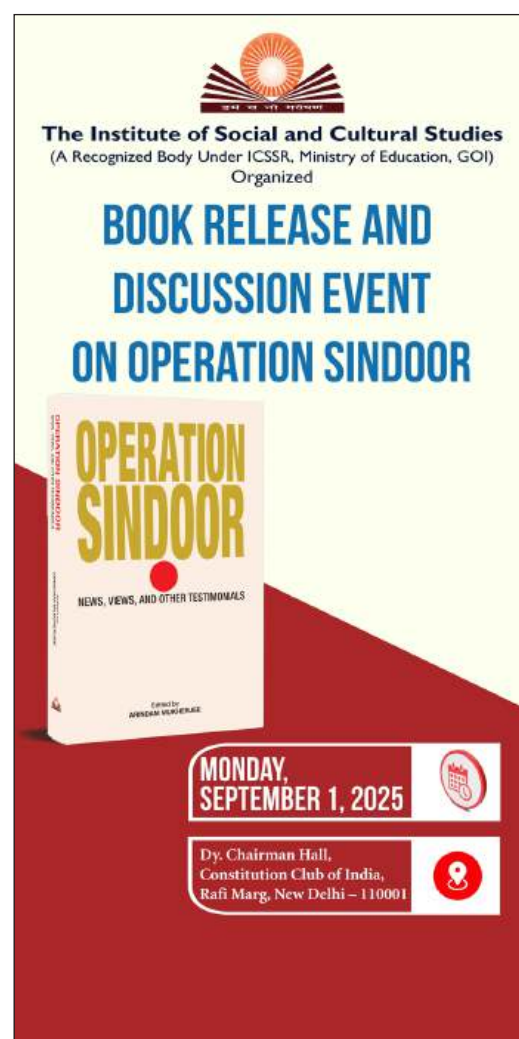
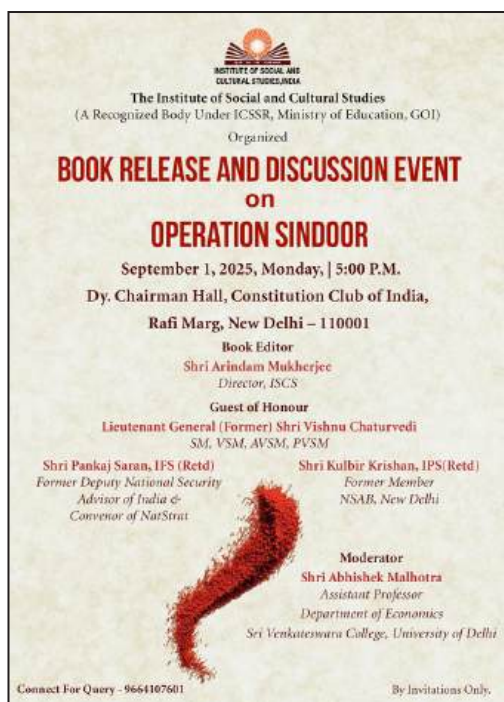


Book Release and Discussion Event on Operation Sindoor

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) successfully hosted a Book Release and Discussion Event Centred on 'Operation Sindoor' on 1 September, 2025 at the Dy. Chairman Hall of the Constitution Club of India, New Delhi.

This programme convened esteemed members from the strategic, diplomatic, and academic sectors, along with research scholars, to engage in a meaningful dialogue regarding the themes explored in the publication. The book, edited by Arindam Mukherjee, Director of ISCS, contextualizes the subject matter within the framework of contemporary national security and policy discussions.

The event featured Shri Vishnu Chaturvedi, Lieutenant General (Retd.), as the Guest of Honour. In his address, he underscored the significance of academic involvement with literature on strategic affairs and pointed out the crucial role of research institutions in enhancing public comprehension of defense and security matters.





(L-R) Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, L.Gen. (Retd.) Vishnu Chaturvedi, Shri Pankaj Saran, Shri Kulbir Krishan

Among the notable speakers were Shri Pankaj Saran, former Deputy National Security Advisor (DNSA) of India, and Shri Kulbir Krishan, a former member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). Both speakers provided analytical insights on the themes presented in the book, placing them within the context of India's shifting strategic environment and policy challenges.

The programme attracted an engaged audience, including scholars, policy analysts, civil servants, and

invited guests. The interactive discussion session that followed the formal release encouraged substantial dialogue, reflecting ISCS's ongoing dedication to promoting informed debate on issues of national and international significance.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks and informal interactions among participants, marking yet another successful intellectual endeavour under ISCS's academic outreach initiatives.



Shri Pankaj Saran



Shri Kulbir Krishan



The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies
(A Recognized Institute Under ICSSR, Ministry of Education, GOI)
Organises

BOOK RELEASE AND DISCUSSION EVENT ON OPERATION SINDOOR

1st | September, 2025 | Dy. Chairman Hall, Constitution Club of India,
Rafi Marg, New Delhi - 110001



constitution
club of india

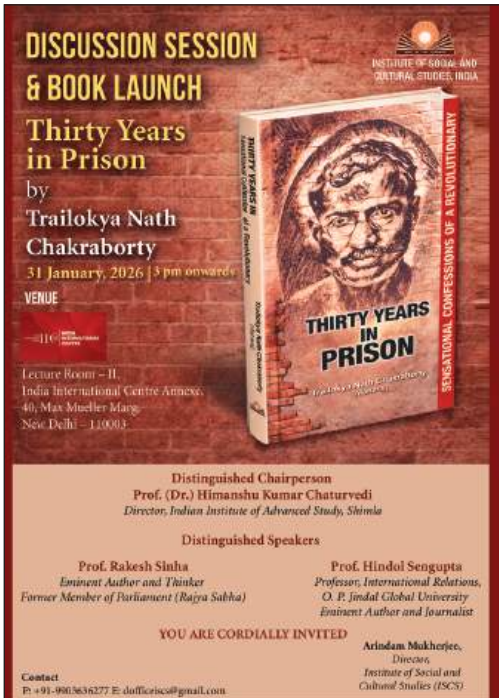
L.Gen. (Retd.) Vishnu Chaturvedi making his address

Discussion Session and Book Launch on Thirty Years in Prison

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) hosted a Discussion Session and Book Launch on 31 January, 2026 at Lecture Room-II, Annexe of the India International Centre, New Delhi. This event celebrated the publication of the book 'Thirty Years in Prison,' written by the revolutionary figure Trailokya Nath Chakraborty, and gathered esteemed scholars, intellectuals and students for a thoughtful discussion regarding the text and its historical relevance.

The session was presided over by Prof. Himanshu Kumar Chaturvedi, Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), who emphasized the significance of autobiographical prison narratives as essential historical sources for comprehending revolutionary movements and colonial resistance in his remarks.

The panel included distinguished speakers such as Dr. Rakesh Sinha, a prominent author and former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), and Shri Hindol Sengupta, Professor of International Relations at O.P. Jindal Global University. Both speakers analyzed the intellectual, political and civilizational aspects reflected in the work, placing the author's experiences within the larger context of India's freedom struggle and the ideological currents of the early twentieth century.



DISCUSSION SESSION & BOOK LAUNCH

Thirty Years in Prison
by
Trailokya Nath Chakraborty

31 January, 2026 | 3 pm onwards

VENUE

Lecture Room – II,
India International Centre Annexe,
40, Max Mueller Marg,
New Delhi – 110003

Distinguished Chairperson
Prof. (Dr.) Himanshu Kumar Chaturvedi
Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

Distinguished Speakers

Prof. Rakesh Sinha
Eminent Author and Thinker
Former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Prof. Hindol Sengupta
Professor, International Relations,
O. P. Jindal Global University
Eminent Author and Journalist

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Arindam Mukherjee,
Director,
Institute of Social and
Cultural Studies (ISCS)

Contact
Ph: +91-9903636277 E: dofficerica@gmail.com



Specifically, Dr. Rakesh Sinha remarked during his address that the contemporary endeavour of accurately documenting the history of India's freedom struggle should not be termed Rewriting of History but rather Rebirth of History. In this context, 'Thirty Years in Prison,' authored by the revolutionary Trailokya Nath Chakraborty, serves as a crucial primary component.

The discussion attracted an engaged audience comprising scholars, students, researchers, and invited guests. The interactive dialogue that ensued

after the formal presentations allowed participants to reflect on historiography, memory, and the influence of revolutionary literature in shaping national consciousness.

The programme concluded with expressions of gratitude towards the speakers and participants, reaffirming ISCS's ongoing dedication to fostering scholarly dialogue and preserving academic integrity. The programme was moderated by Dr. Punit Kumar Agarwal on behalf of the institute.



Dr. Rakesh Sinha, sharing his views as panellist





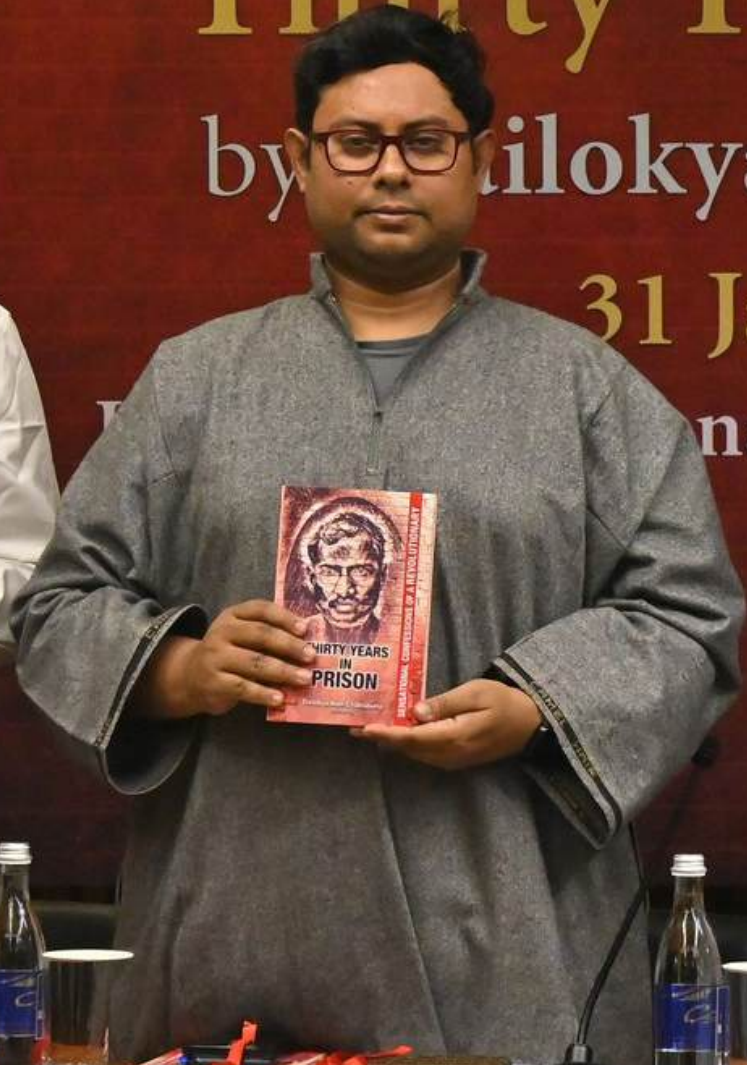
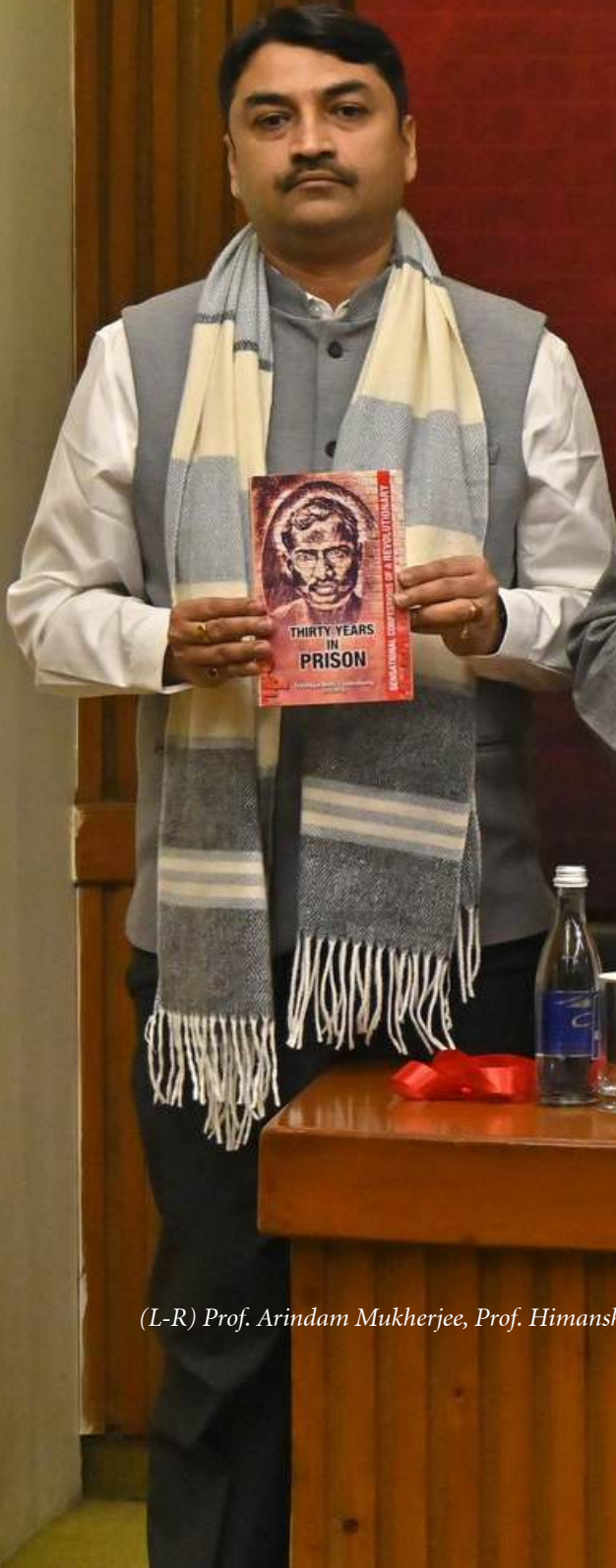
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Thirty Years

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(L-R) Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Prof. Himanshu Kumar Chaturvedi, Shri Hindol Sengupta, Dr. Rakesh Sinha, Dr. Punit Kumar Agarwal

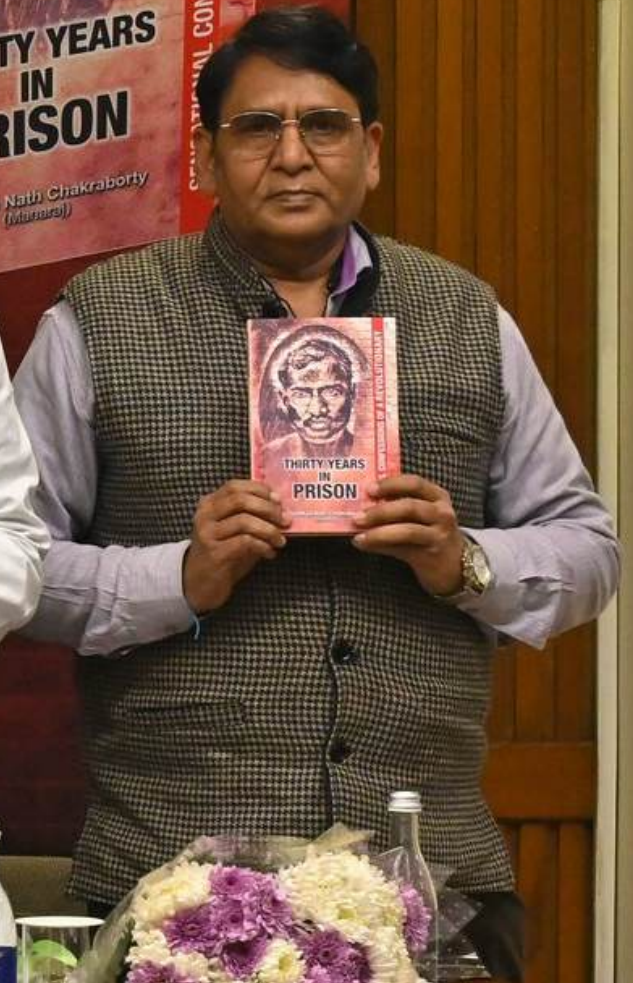
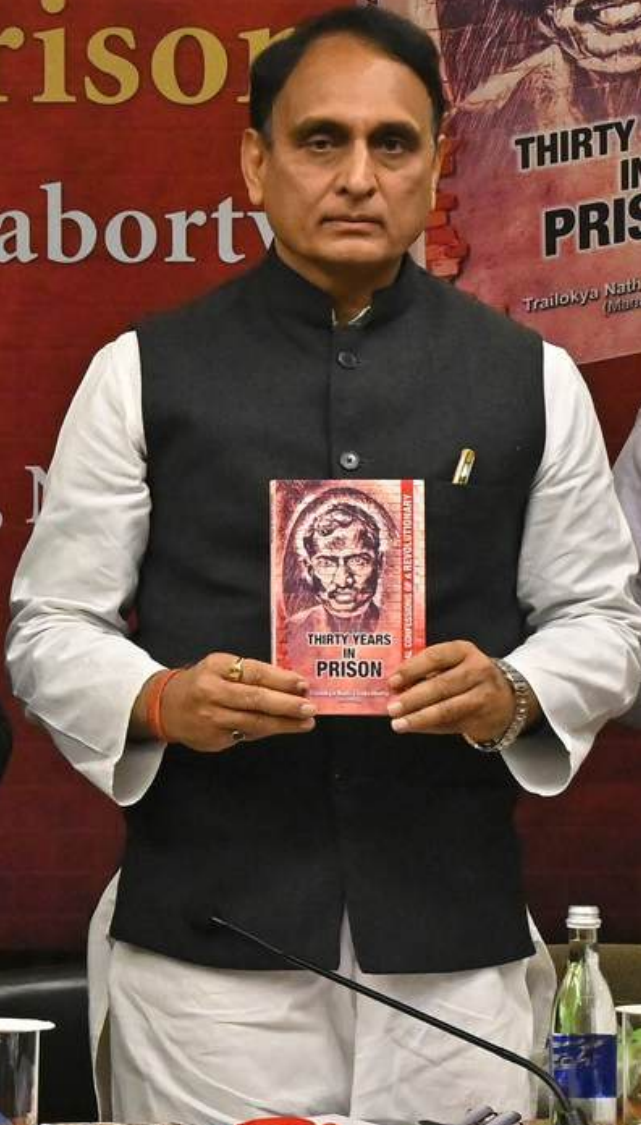
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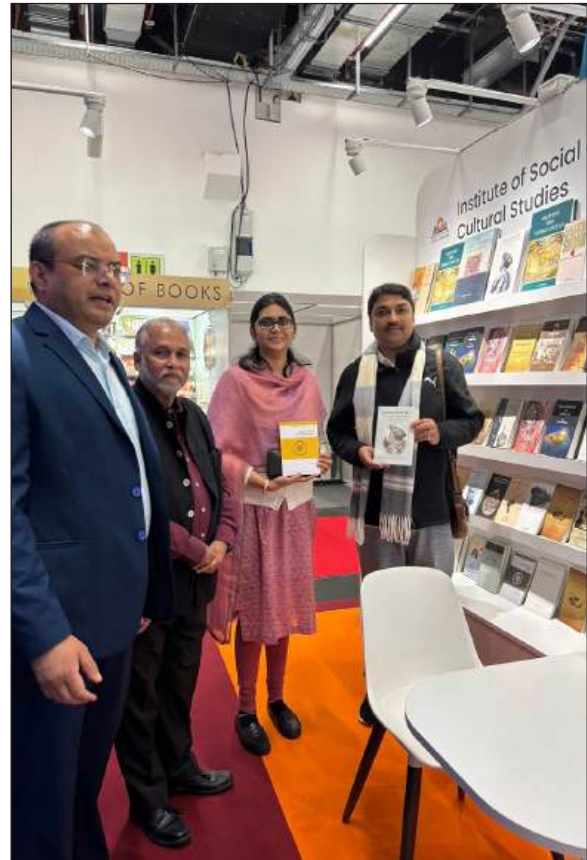


INTERNATIONAL

Frankfurt Book Fair 2025

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, for the first time, participated at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany in 2025. The Frankfurt Book Fair is reckoned as the world's largest book fair. Thus participation at such an event was another delight for the Institute altogether. The Institute accorded a chance to feature its rich set to publications to the world's most renowned intellectual and academic colossal for the second time. The Institute's

publications not only garnered interest of the scholars and academicians across the world but became a source of interest for the general readers who expressed the desire for the ISCS's publications to become a part of their reading shelves. The Institute's vibrant publications essaying gamut of thoughts by eminent writers narrated chronicles and at the same time dispensed about policies engendering nation to impart strategies to pace up with the changing global dynamics.



(L-R) Prof. Dhanajay Singh, Dr. Milind Marathe, Mrs. Suchita Kishore, Prof. Arindam Mukherjee

Moscow International Book Fair

The prestigious Moscow International Book Fair 2025, held from 3–7 September, 2025, brought together more than 300 publishers, cultural institutions, and literary organizations from countries across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and beyond, serving as a vibrant forum for international exchange in publishing, research, and cultural dialogue.

This year India, participated as the Guest of Honour Country at the Moscow International Book Fair. Acting as the nodal agency of the Guest of Honour Presentations at the International Book Fair, the National Book Trust, and India created an approximately 400 sq. meter Indian Pavilion at the book fair to showcase a special exhibit of books from India, organize seminars, literary programmes, reading session and author's representations. The Indian pavilion in the Moscow International Book Fair drew in around 50 renowned Indian publishers from across India.

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) at present has established itself as a pioneering institution for scholarly research and publication,

producing works that span a wide spectrum of academic and cultural disciplines. Its publications reflect a commitment to rigorous research, critical analysis, and intellectual engagement with both historical and contemporary issues.

ISCS publications encompass a wide array of subjects such as the Indian Revolutionary Movements, 19th-century indian nationalism, foreign policy and strategic affairs, literature, philosophy and art and culture. The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, with its extensive collection of publications participated in the Moscow International Book fair. One of its current publications, *Thirty Years in Prison*, authored by the revolutionary Trailokya Nath Chakraborty was mentioned in the National Book Trust, India's publication titled *A Collective Exhibit of Books from India*, Moscow International Book Fair, 2025.

The participation of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies highlighted its commitment to promoting scholarly research, cultural insights, and academic publications on social sciences to an international audience.



NATIONAL

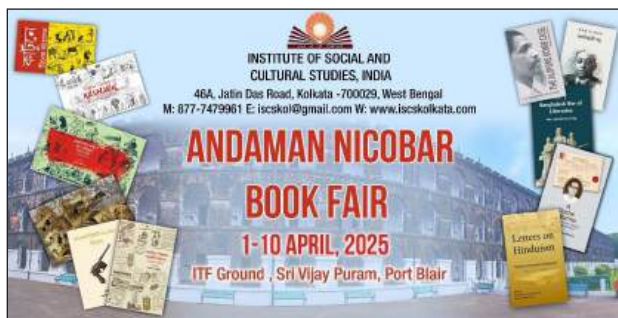
Kolkata & Port Blair

Participation at the 49th International Book Fair, 2026 – The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies for the 9th time participated at the Kolkata International Book Fair between 22nd January to 3rd February, 2025. The Institute, like each time, brought a fresh stock of ideas which reflected through its rich new set of both Bengali and English publications and set of exclusive memorabilias. The new and the old range of institute's range of publications was able to captivate the attention of the readers across all ages. With time and passing years the institute's stall at the International Book Fair is actually becoming a must visit one for the book lovers.



Book lovers at the ISCS's Stall at International Kolkata Book Fair

Andaman-Nicobar Book Fair 2025 - The National Book Trust of India and the Department of Art and Culture, Andaman Administration, organized the Andaman and Nicobar Book Fair that took place between 1st April and 10th April, 2025, at the ITF, Sri Vijaya Puram. The fair was organized to promote reading culture and literary awareness among residents, especially students and young readers of the islands. The fair was inaugurated by Admiral D. K. Joshi, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.), Lt. Governor, A&N Islands. The Book Fair featured



around 32 stalls displaying more than 30,000 books of various genres and authors and from different publishers across India. The ten-day literary extravaganza witnessed overwhelming participation from all walks of life. Booklovers gathered in large numbers at the festival ground and enjoyed the specially curated literary sessions. A special feature of the ten-day festival was the Children's Corner, which featured fun activities, workshops, and sessions tailored specially for kids. The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), a Kolkata-based research Centre that has dedicated itself to advancing interdisciplinary knowledge in the social sciences and humanities, marked its presence at the

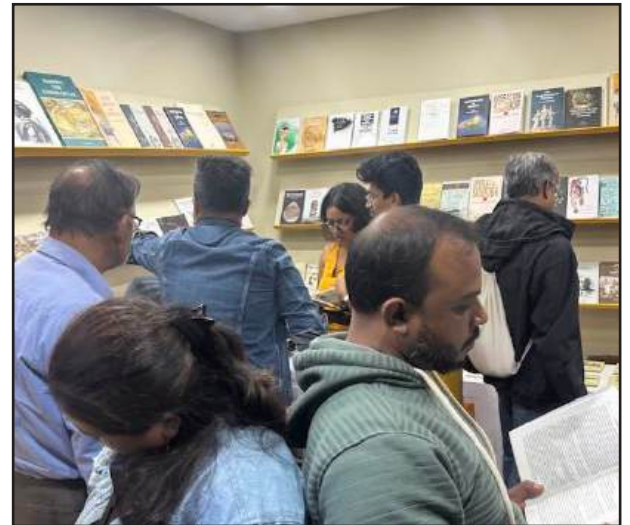
Andaman & Nicobar Book Fair 2025 held from 1 to 10 April, 2025 at the ITF Ground, Sri Vijaya Puram. In the fair it showcased its recent publication that includes books on Indian Revolutionary Movements, 19th-century Indian Nationalism, Foreign Policy and Strategic Affairs, Literature, Philosophy, and Art and Culture. Students, teachers, and also general readers in large numbers visited the stall of ISCS. The picture postcards published by the institute specially drew the attention of the people. The representative of the institute was present throughout the fair, interacting with visitors and offering insights into the institute's research thrust areas and upcoming publications. The fair also provided the institute the opportunity to converse and share ideas with fellow publishers from different parts of India.



ISCS's Book Stall at Andaman Nicobar Book Fair

Participation at the ISCS organized Book Fair at Second Purvodaya Lit Fest – The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies organized a Purvodaya Lit Fest from 24th to 28th November at the ICCR, Kolkata, which along with multiple interactive sessions by eminent authors from seven states of Eastern India and numerous activities, also arranged a Book Fair

which was participated by renowned publishers. The Institute along with policy planning domain has a publishing unit which installed its stall at the proposed book fair and thus opened up an opportunity for the book lovers to find their interest at the book stall yet again.



PUBLICATIONS



Bi-Monthly Bulletins (2025-2026)

News Reel – Since 2019, with the Institute’s Director Shri Arindam Mukherjee as an Editor-in-Chief, ISCS’s Bi-Monthly “News Reel” has been discerned as an interesting compilation that enables wide multi-sectoral global readers and writers to identify and braid dynamic and contemporary narratives on precincts of culture, power and politics. So far, each of its segment has conjured a discrete flavour and accorded the Institute’s readers an agility to recognize and learn about stimulating arguments, future indictments, marshalling economy, defence, environmental sustainability altogether.



Purvodaya: The Rise of Opportunities – The Institute’s other Bi-Monthly journal “Purvodaya: The Rise of Opportunities” is published as part of the Institute’s Chapter on Purvodaya. The Bi-Monthly, with the Institute’s Director Shri Arindam Mukherjee as the Editor-in-Chief, was launched by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon’ble Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in November, 2021. The Bulletin, through English/Odia mediums discusses and disseminates the critical and emerging areas of development in the eastern states of India. It focuses on policy related issues on 'Purvodaya' initiative of Government of India. The Bi-Monthly for the financial year 2022-2023 was supported by The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Ministry of Education, GOI.

Out Look

(E-Series of Contemporary Writings and Essays)

The changing time have been giving more importance to conversations and sharing of thoughts through digital mediums. As the thoughts can be interfaced and attributed over a click and can accommodate debates of thousands effortlessly. Thus to interact more on the contemporary happenings curbing time across boundaries much effortlessly, the Institute has initiated a separate column “Outlook” as a part of its website that is indulging policy makers, academicians to write and share their thoughts on varied issues.

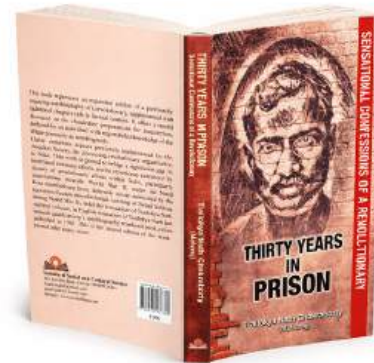
Publications (2024-2025)

◆ Nationalist Thoughts

Thirty Years in Prison – Author: Trailokya Nath Chakraborty

The book *Thirty Years in Prison* represents an expanded edition of a profoundly engaging autobiography of a revolutionary, supplemented with additional chapters rich in factual content. It offers a candid discourse on the clandestine preparations for insurrection, authored by an individual with unparalleled knowledge of the Indian independence movement.

While primarily being an autobiography, *Thirty Years in Prison* unveils numerous aspects previously unaddressed by the Anusilan Samity, the pioneering revolutionary organization of India. This work is poised to bridge a significant gap in the historical narrative of Indian revolutionary activities since the early twentieth century. The book provides an authentic account of revolutionary efforts within India, particularly during the World War II, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, marking it as a significant historical revelation. The current volume is an English translation of Trailokya Nath Chakraborty's autobiography, rendered by Nirod Dutta from the original Bengali text. This is the second edition of the book, printed after many years.



Samoyik Patrikar Bigyapone Swadesh Bodh – Editor: Snehangshu Bhattacharjee

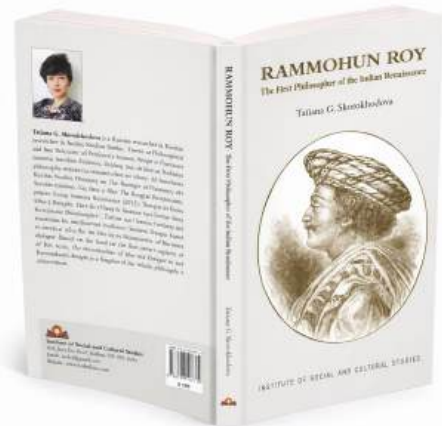
The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the subsequent Swadeshi and Boycott movement resulted in a resurgence of indigenous industries and nurtured a renewed sense of nationalism among the populace. During this era, domestic industries began promoting their products through newspapers and magazines. These advertisements transcended mere commercial interests; they evolved into instruments for political and social enlightenment. Consequently, Swadeshi advertisements played a crucial role in connecting the ideals of the Swadeshi movement with the daily lives of ordinary people.

This book titled *Samoyik Patrikar Bigyapone Swadesh Bodh* (1905-1907) is an anthology of selected advertisements for products produced by various local industries, which were featured in magazines from 1905 to 1947. The book illustrates to its audience how these advertisements were employed to foster national awareness, economic independence, and appreciation for indigenous culture.

Rammohun Roy: The First Philosopher of the Indian Renaissance – Author : Tatiana G. Shorokhodova

Rammohun Roy: The First Philosopher of the Indian Renaissance, authored by Tatiana Shorokhodova, offers a rigorous and insightful exploration of the intellectual legacy of Rammohun Roy, widely regarded as the father of modern Indian philosophy. Situating Roy's thought within the broader framework of the Indian-Western intellectual dialogue, the book examines how his ideas emerged at the intersection of indigenous philosophical traditions and Western rational inquiry.

Drawing on a close hermeneutical reading of Roy's writings, Shorokhodova reconstructs his thought as a coherent, systematic, and comprehensive philosophical vision. This approach moves beyond viewing Rammohun Roy merely as a social reformer or historical figure, presenting him instead as a philosopher in the fullest sense. The book's nuanced analysis and conceptual clarity make it a significant contribution to the study of Indian philosophy, the history of ideas, and cross-cultural intellectual exchange.



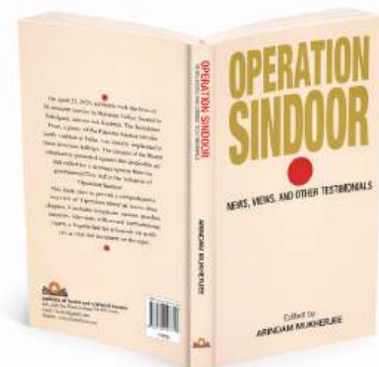
◆ International Relations

Operation Sindoor: News, Views, And Other Testimonials

– Editor: Arindam Mukherjee

On April 22, 2025, a brutal militant attack in the Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, claimed the lives of 26 innocent tourists. The atrocity was directly linked to The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the Pakistan-backed terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba. This heinous act shocked the nation and drew widespread condemnation. Citizens across Bharat responded with grief, anger, and unity, strongly protesting the attack and demanding a firm and decisive response from the government. In response to the national outcry and the imperative to uphold security and justice, the government initiated Operation Sindoor.

This book titled, Operation Sindoor: News, Views, And Other Testimonials offers a comprehensive overview of Operation Sindoor across three chapters. It brings together key speeches and official statements, interviews of prominent international security experts, and a curated selection of important op-eds, providing a multidimensional perspective on the operation and its broader implications.

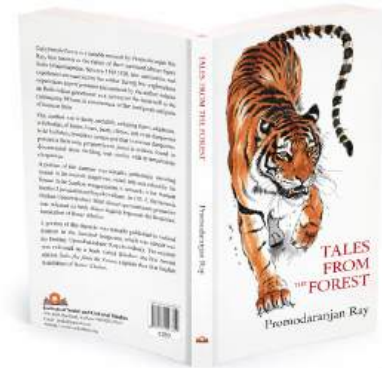


◆ Others

Tales from the Forest – Author: Promodaranjan Ray

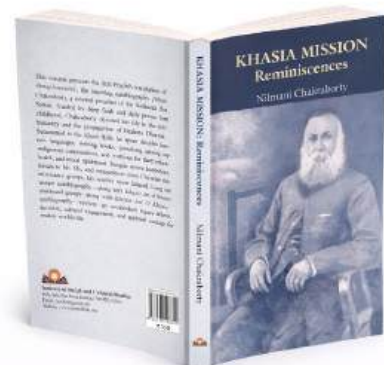
Tales from the Forest is a notable memoir by Promodaranjan Ray, best known as the father of the renowned literary figure Leela Majumder. Composed between 1899 and 1920, this memoir reveals a series of exhilarating and poignant experiences encountered by the author during his explorations as a surveyor for the British-Indian government of the dense forests of Burma, now known as Myanmar, as well as the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the contemporary Bangladesh and parts of Assam in India. Long before the renowned Jim Corbett, Ray documented these thrilling true stories with remarkable eloquence.

A portion of this memoir was initially published in a serialized format in the Sandesh magazine, which was edited by his brother, Upendra kishore Roychowdhury. In 1920, the memoir was released as a book titled Boner Khabor. This current edition, Tales from the Forest, represents the first English translation of Boner Khabor.



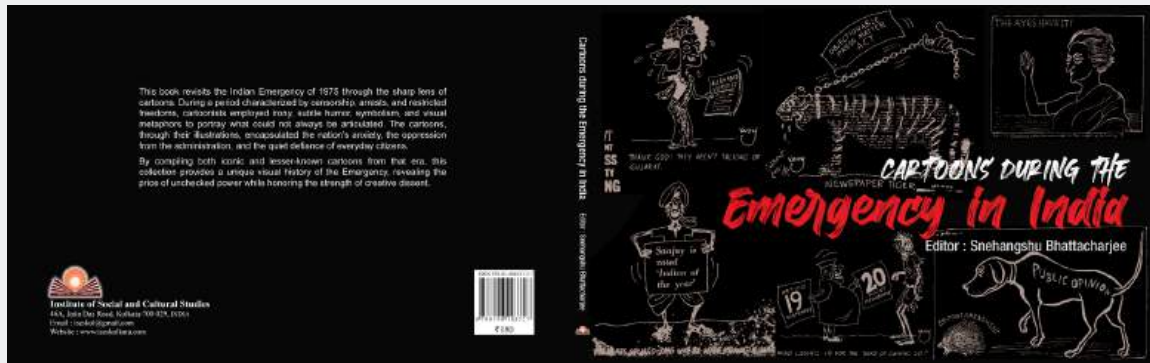
Khasia Mission Reminiscences – Author: Nilmani Chakraborty

This book is the first English translation of Atmajibansmriti, the inspiring autobiography of Nilmani Chakraborty, a revered preacher of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. Guided by deep faith and daily prayer from childhood, Chakraborty devoted his life to the service of humanity and the propagation of Brahma Dharma. Summoned to the Khasia Hills, he spent decades learning new languages, writing books, preaching among indigenous communities, and working for their education, health, and moral upliftment. Despite severe hardship, threats to his life, and competition from Christian missionary groups, his resolve never faltered. Long out of print and largely unknown even to Bengali readers, this remarkable autobiography – along with Khasia Jati O Khasia Mission – revives an overlooked legacy of selfless devotion, cultural engagement, and spiritual courage for readers worldwide.



Cartoons during the emergency

Editor : Snehangshu Bhattacharjee



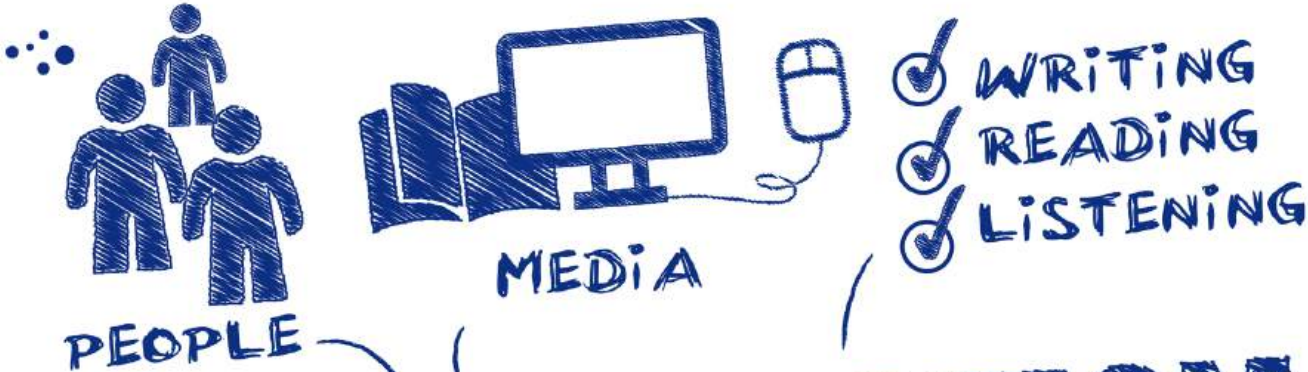
This book revisits the Indian Emergency of 1975 through the sharp lens of cartoons. During a period characterized by censorship, arrests, and restricted freedoms, cartoonist employed irony, subtle humour, symbolism and visual metaphors to portray what could not always be articulated. The cartoons through their illustrations, encapsulated the nation's anxiety, the oppression from the administration, and

the quiet defiance of everyday citizens.

This book Cartoons during the Emergency is a compilation of both iconic and lesser known cartoons form that era. This collection provided a unique visual history of the Emergency, revealing the price of unchecked power while honouring the strength of creative dissent.



ORGANIZATIONAL MULTI-MODAL APPROACH



COMMUNICATION



ISCS's 6th Annual Planning Meeting

26th April, 2025 | The Floatel, Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) organized its 6th Annual Planning Meeting at The Floatel - Jetty 9, The Floatel, 10, Strand Rd, opposite SBI Head Quarters, B.B.D. Bagh, Kolkata-700001, West Bengal. The ISCS organizes its Annual Planning Meeting every year in order to review its previous year's performance and also to design a blue print of its initiatives for the coming year altogether.

The planning meeting marked the assemblage of institutes members, stakeholders and bastions who have been supporting the institute and its work in multiple ways. The meeting initiated with a welcome note followed to which a 2 minutes of silence was



observed by all the participants to pay homage to all the martyrs who have lost their lives in the Pahalgam Terrorist Attack on 22nd April, 2025.

The first phase of the planning meeting gave an overview of the institute's previous year's range of activities. The presentation in a précised form provided an outlook of the initiatives taken and the institute's objectives behind those. It featured

on the institute's range of enhanced activities and transcending networks that are enabling the institute to carry out divergent yet macro scale activities.



ISCS's Member and Participant introduction at the 6th Annual Planning Meeting

The conclusion of the phase one was marked with the formal release of the ISCS's Annual Report for the year 2024-2025 by The Director of the Institute Shri Arindam Mukherjee and other ISCS's Associates like Shri Krishnenedu Baksi, Dr. Jhumpa Mukherjee, Shri Raj Basu and Shri Gautam Chakraborty.

The second phase of the meeting presented the ideas and the planner which the institute would like to take up in the coming year. The discussion and presentation was initiated by the Director. The chapter wise planner of the event along with the proposed set of ISCS's publications were also shared with the participants.

The final phase of the meeting marked interaction between the members of the organization and the participants of the meeting surrounding the range of initiatives that ISCS had proposed for the coming year. The Planning meeting along with associates also attained the participation of the young scholars and students who also shared their ideas and views on the organizational structural and functional pedagogy.

The Annual Planning Meeting concluded with National Anthem and with a pledge of working harder, facilitate union of multi-sectoral communities and harness its efforts towards a more diverse and comprehensive range of research through its chapter initiatives.



The Release of 2024-2025 Annual Report

Discussion on ISCS's Blue Print : North Bengal Chapter

14th June, 2025 | Hotel Surya Grand, Siliguri

The first planning meeting of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) for North Bengal took place successfully on June 14 at Hotel Surya Grand in Siliguri, representing a crucial advancement in the institute's intellectual and institutional footprint in the area. The meeting assembled a varied and multidisciplinary group of 26 attendees, which included professors from different colleges and universities in North Bengal, along with legal experts and social workers. This diverse mix facilitated a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue that encompassed academic, legal, and grassroots viewpoints.

The primary focus of the discussions was on the strategic growth of ISCS initiatives in North Bengal. Participants took part in productive conversations aimed at pinpointing research priorities specific to the region, encouraging academic partnerships, and crafting outreach programmes that resonate with the socio-cultural and developmental realities of the area. There was a strong emphasis on establishing a sustainable framework for knowledge sharing, policy-driven research, and community involvement, thereby enhancing ISCS's position as a driver of regional intellectual advancement.

A significant result of the meeting was the selection of Professor Joydeep Bhattacharya from Kurseong College as the Coordinator for ISCS in North Bengal. His appointment is anticipated to offer organizational guidance and support the effective execution of ISCS initiatives in the region. Participants voiced their confidence in his academic leadership and understanding of the local context,

which will be vital in fostering institutional networks and promoting ISCS's goals.

The meeting was led by Professor Arindam Mukherjee, the Director of ISCS, who steered the discussions with a well-defined strategic vision. In his address, he emphasized the necessity of decentralizing academic efforts and encouraging research frameworks that are rooted in the region. He also pointed out ISCS's dedication to promoting interdisciplinary dialogue and establishing platforms for collaboration among scholars, practitioners, and civil society representatives.

In summary, the meeting established a solid groundwork for the organized growth of ISCS in North Bengal, paving the way for upcoming programmes, partnerships, and research initiatives that will significantly enhance the region's academic and socio-cultural environment.



MoU's Signing

In order to foster Institute's network with other educational institutes, ISCS has signed two very important MoU's with University of Nalanda and Kurseong College. Institute believes that the undertaken Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) will establish formal partnerships that enhance educational quality, foster research collaboration, and improve student employability through industry exposure. These agreements facilitate resource sharing, internships, faculty exchange, and joint projects, strengthening academic-industry links.

MoU between University of Nalanda and Institute of Social and Cultural Studies- The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and University of Nalanda on 27th November, 2025. The official course of actions was undertaken by Shri Arindam Mukhejee, Director, ISCS and Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi – Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University.



Prof. Arindam Mukhejee, and Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi signing MoU

MoU between The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidyamahapitha- The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidyamahapitha signed an MoU. The MoU was undertaken by Prof.Arindam Mukherjee and Dr.Mausumi Ghosh, Principal Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidyamahapitha



MoU between Kursong College and Institute of Social and Cultural Studies – The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and Kursong College signed an MoU. The MoU has been undertaken by Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Director,ISCS and Samir Bal, Principal Kurseong College on 13th June, 2025



MoU between Scottish Church College, Kolkata and The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies- The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies and The Scottish Church College,Kolkata. The MoU has been undertaken by Prof. Arindam Mukherjee, Director,ISCS and Dr. Madhu Manjari Mandal Chaube on 23rd April 2025

AUDIO/VISUALS/MEDIA COVERAGE





DD Bangla coverage of National Panel Discussion on Energy Security and Stability in the Bay of Bengal: An Eastern India Perspective on 30th July, 2025 at Hotel Astor, Kolkata.



দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের সার্বশতবর্ষে বিশেষ অনুষ্ঠান



নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি— বাংলা শিশুসাহিত্যের প্রবাদপ্রতিম অষ্টা দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদারের জন্মের সার্বশতবর্ষ উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত হয়ে গেল এক বিশেষ অর্ধদিবসীয় অনুষ্ঠান। লোককথা সংগ্রহ ও কিশোরমন উপযোগী সাহিত্য সৃষ্টিতে তাঁর অবদান বাংলা সাহিত্যে আজও অমলিন। গত ২৮ মার্চ শ্রীঅরবিন্দ ভবন এবং 'ইনস্টিটিউট অব সোস্যাল অ্যান্ড কালচারাল স্টাডিজ'-এর যৌথ উদ্যোগে 'জন্ম সার্বশতবর্ষে দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার' শীর্ষক এই অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়। এই অনুষ্ঠানের উদ্দেশ্য তাঁর সাহিত্যকে নতুনভাবে মূল্যায়ন করা এবং নতুন প্রজন্মের কাছে তা

তুলে ধরা। অনুষ্ঠানের প্রধান আকর্ষণ ছিল একটি বিশেষ প্রদর্শনী, যেখানে তাঁর রচনা, পাণ্ডুলিপি, ব্যক্তিগত চিঠিপত্র ও নানা ঐতিহাসিক দলিল প্রদর্শন। পাশাপাশি কাঠখোদাই শিল্পের ঐতিহ্যবাহী সরঞ্জামও তুলে ধরা হয় এই অনুষ্ঠানে। এছাড়াও জ্যোতির্ময় ভট্টাচার্য পরিচালনায় কাঠখোদাই শিল্পের উপর একটি কর্মশালার আয়োজন করা হয়। ছিল শিশু-কিশোরদের জন্য ঠাকুরমার ঝুলি অবলম্বনে চিত্রাঙ্কন প্রতিযোগিতাও। আয়োজকদের মতে, এই উদ্যোগ নতুন প্রজন্মের মধ্যে সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির প্রতি আগ্রহ বাড়াতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নেবে।

Dainik Statesman, March 31, 2026

Morning India
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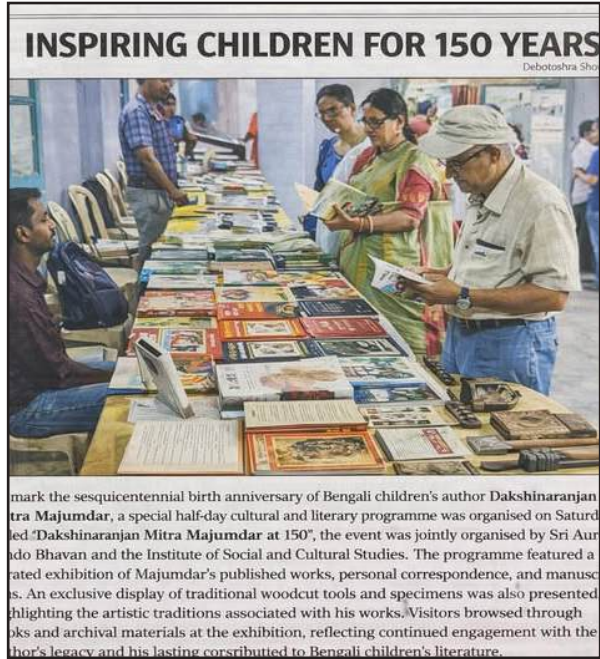
Miscellaneous

Kolkata hosts National Seminar on Buddhism

MI News Service, Kolkata: Kolkata recently hosted a National Seminar on "Socio-Cultural Practices among The Buddhist Communities of Himalayan Region and Nearby Areas". The programme was held at ICCR and was organized by Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India.

Eminent personalities and social scientists like Arindam Mukherjee(Director-ISCS), Prof Vinay Kr Rao(JNU), Dr. Puja Dabral(Nalanda University), Prof Projit Kr Palit(Assam University), Dr. Jhumpa Mukherjee(HOD-Pol Sc-St Xaviers College), Dr. Avienaash EP, Dr. Swarup Prasad Ghosh(Director-MAKAIAS), Raj Basu(Advisor-Rural Tourism & Home stays-Govt of Arunachal Pradesh), Prof Ujjal Kumar(Dep of Buddhist Studies-Kolkata University), Dr. Ajanta Das(Research Associate-ISCS-ICSSR), Prof Alok Kumar Ghosh and many other dignitaries were present at the auspicious occasion.

The seminar laid emphasis on varied topics encompassing 'Buddhism', its history and contemporary challenges. It also discussed matters related to 'Buddhism' and its importance in socio-cultural trends towards sustainable living.



mark the sesquicentennial birth anniversary of Bengali children's author Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, a special half-day cultural and literary programme was organised on Saturday 'Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar at 150', the event was jointly organised by Sri Aurobindo Bhavan and the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies. The programme featured a rated exhibition of Majumdar's published works, personal correspondence, and manuscripts. An exclusive display of traditional woodcut tools and specimens was also presented highlighting the artistic traditions associated with his works. Visitors browsed through books and archival materials at the exhibition, reflecting continued engagement with the author's legacy and his lasting contribution to Bengali children's literature.

ToI, March 29, 2026,



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