

INDO-PACIFIC PEACE FORUM (IPPF)

A GPF INDIA INITIATIVE

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

ONE REGION, ONE DREAM
PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL

WORKSHOP ON “PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION”

September 27, 2024



INTRODUCTION

Indo-Pacific Peace Forum (IPPF) is excited to introduce its first workshop on Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific Region, an initiative of the Global Peace Foundation, India (GPF India). On September 27, 2024, New Delhi, GPF India hosted a dynamic and thought-provoking workshop on "Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific Region." Organized collaboratively by the Indo-Pacific Peace Forum, GPF India, and Antar-Rashtriya Sahyog Parishad (ARSP), the event aimed to address the evolving security, peace and development challenges faced by countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Against the backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions and environmental concerns, the workshop brought together global leaders, diplomats, scholars, and defense experts to discuss solutions that could promote regional stability and prosperity.

01.

Inauguration of the Indo-Pacific Peace Forum by convening diplomats and subject matter experts.

02.

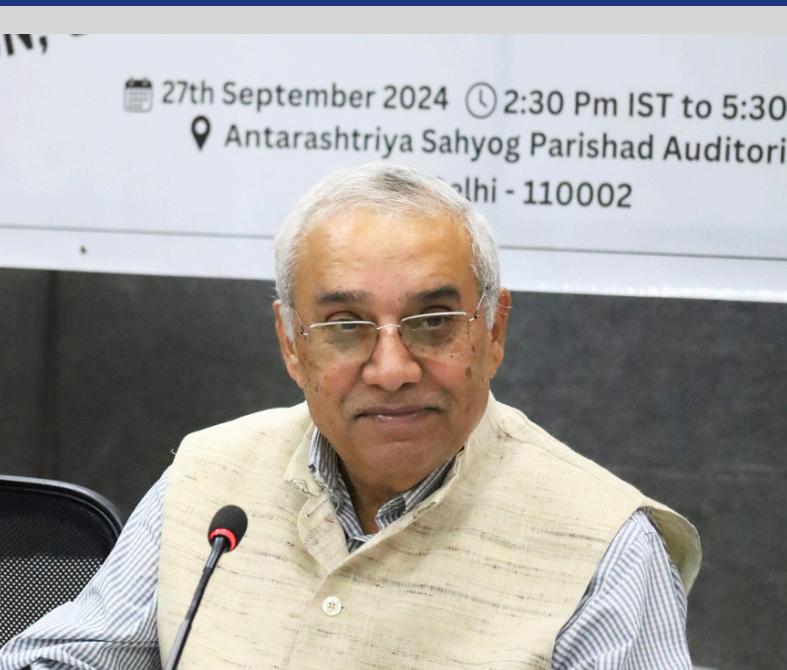
Launch of Book
'Vasudhaiva
Kutumbakam - The way
forward to Global
Peace'



THE SUCCESS SPECTRUM

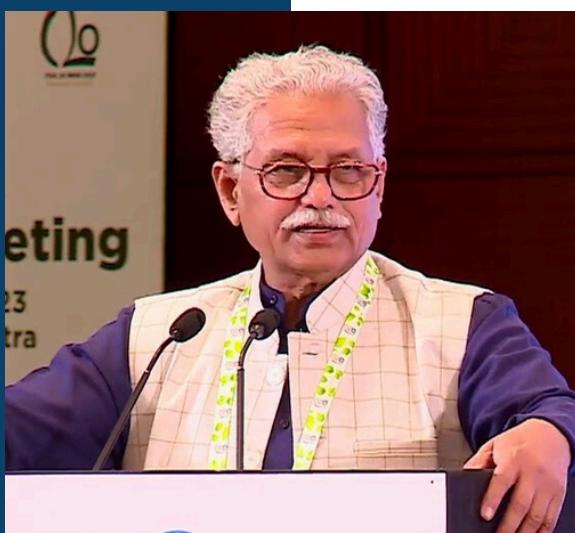
On a global scale, the Indo-Pacific Peace Forum envisions creating a platform for international cooperation, promotion of peace and security, and sustainable development across the Indo-Pacific region, while addressing global geopolitical tensions and environmental challenges to ensure a harmonious and prosperous world.

OPENING SESSION



DR. MARKANDEY RAI
CHAIRMAN, GPF INDIA

SHYAM PARANDE
SECRETARY GENERAL, ARSP



Launch of the Forum

Dr. Rai opened the discussion with a deep dive into the Indo-Pacific Region and provided the context for the GPLC 2023. He drew upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi's MAITRI (Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific) initiative. He also underscored the importance of dialogue in preventing conflicts in the region and the leading role that India can play in shaping the way forward.

"The Indo-Pacific region holds tremendous potential, but only through mutual understanding and collaboration we can realize this potential," he said. Dr. Rai emphasized the role of diplomacy, development, and sustainable practices in forging a peaceful future.

Sri Shyam Parande addressed the gathering by focusing on the Indian Diaspora, People of Indian Origin (PIO), and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). He discussed how they have grown over time. He highlighted the related activities, conferences, and talks organized and supported by ARSP, with the first initiative in 1969, where they invited PIO students to join universities in India and assisted them. Over time their activities have expanded, especially in neighbouring countries, focusing on what happens in and around the Indo-Pacific region.

DISCUSSION SESSIONS

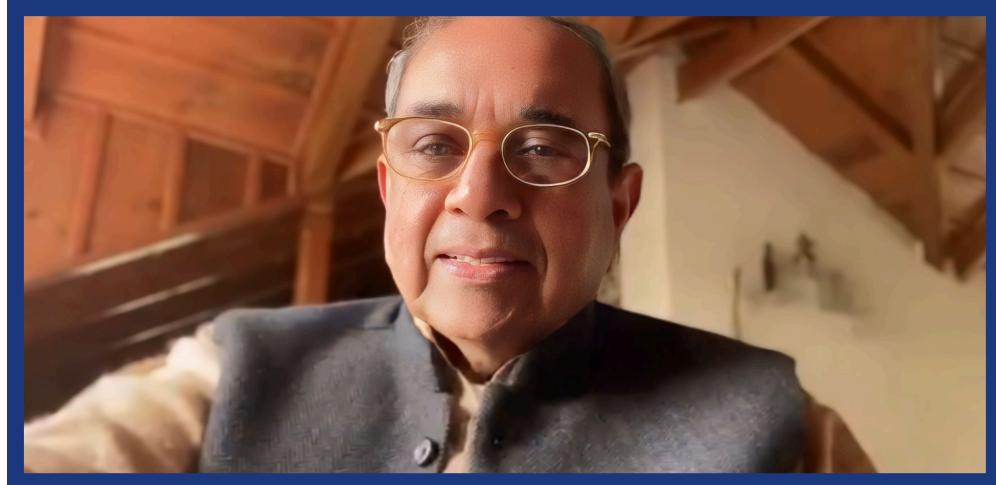
Ambassador Virendra Gupta noted that everyone's attention is on the Indo-Pacific, as various groups are working there. The area is turning into an arena where countries and people are concentrating their efforts. He emphasized briefly the complexities and issues involved in the region.

Amb. Gupta highlighted that the Indo-Pacific region is a very significant economic driver. However, he added how the question of global geopolitical dynamics also arises, underscoring the strategic importance of these dynamics in the region. Further, he said that with the balance of power in play and the clash of different cultures, there has been no resolution to any conflict, and this region continues to face newly emerging challenges. Therefore, he suggested a requirement for alternative approaches.



AMB. VIRENDRA GUPTA
PRESIDENT, ARSP

He referenced Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, an ancient idea that existed long before it became fashionable, suggesting that it could be explored to understand how we can move forward. While there is nothing wrong with pursuing national interests, both nationally and internationally, in the longer timeframe we must realize that our benefits lie in fostering goodwill among our neighbours, countries, and broader communities.



AMB. SHASHANK

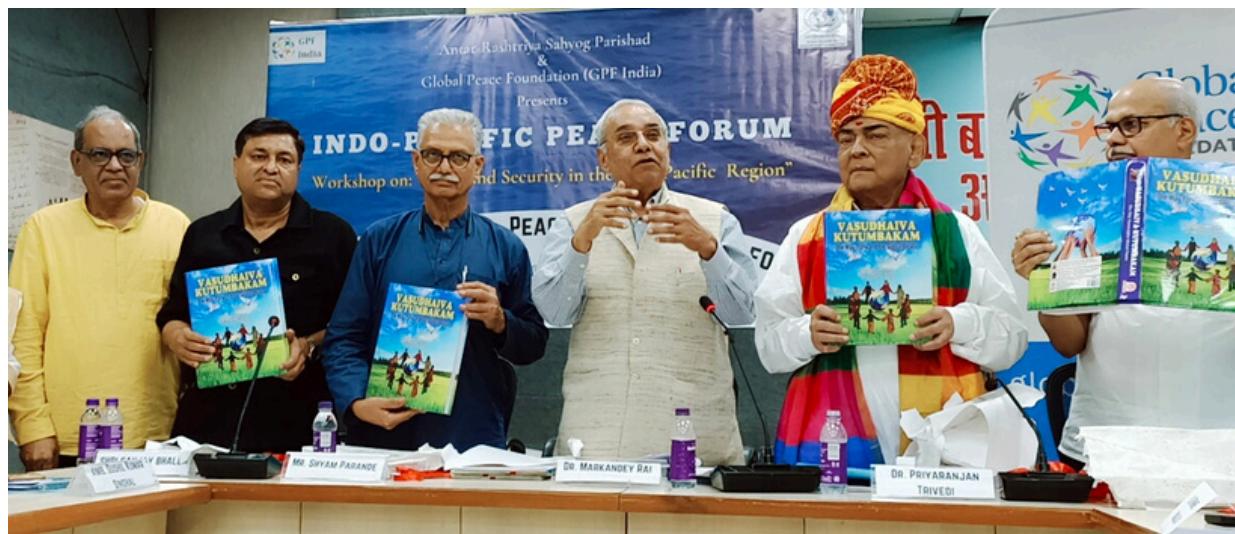
FORMER PRESIDENT, ARSP (VIRTUAL)

Ambassador Shashank shared his experience of the times he was living in different South-East Asian countries around 1972, when some of those countries were at war. He brought to attention some shared thoughts on peace among Asian countries. He said that, the Indian-origin people carry Indian cultural traditions with them. Native people are very impressed with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam's idea already. Local people also influence and cross-influence Asian culture and civilizations. We are always thinking of finding norms or means to settle differences. He suggested, that if we continue the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- and similar ideas of many other countries in Asia - and carry forward our old traditions, the Indo-Pacific will flourish like never before. The cross-cultural interaction among all of us can provide a multilateral framework for the future. We need not think of individual countries but rather focus on how we can help each other.

He further suggested that if we include young generations in new projects and involve all our Indian universities, educational institutes of a different kind can emerge in many new areas. Bringing attention to the issue of shared rivers, he suggested that engineers and water managers be brought together from different countries in Asia to cooperate on points of common interest. He appreciated the Modi government's initiatives for improving transport connectivity in the region, encompassing road, railway, and air networks. He emphasized the importance of connecting people—students, officials, and linguists—to foster a better understanding of one another, including customs and regulations, while promoting transparency and incorporating the idea of faster and more efficient movement.



BOOK LAUNCH



"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam The Way Forward for Global Peace"

A key highlight of this event was the launch of the book "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: The Way Forward for Global Peace**" by Dr. Priya Ranjan Trivedi, President of the Confederation of Indian Universities, in the presence of the authors of the book, Dr. Markandey Rai, Dr. P.C. Sinha, and Dr. Surendra K. Pathak. The book encapsulates the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family) and explores how its principles can be applied to foster global peace. "At its core, this book explores the profound theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and aims to offer solutions for achieving peace and resolving conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region," Dr. Rai said. Alongside the book, the Indo-Pacific Peace Forum Brochure was launched. Dr. Sinha outlined GPF India's vision and approach to addressing security issues in the Indo-Pacific region. He reiterated that the way forward for India lies in strengthening regional engagement, enhancing economic integration, and promoting multilateralism.

DR. PRIYA RANJAN TRIVEDI

PRESIDENT, CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Trivedi bestowed a critical role to leadership in fostering peace. He remarked, "Every individual here is a leader in their own right, and our unique expertise will illuminate pathways to resolving the complex issues we face. The spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam holds tremendous power to mitigate conflict and foster peace through education, cooperation, and dialogue." Dr. Trivedi called for greater cooperation among educators, institutions, and nations to embed values of peace and moral leadership in future generations. He also talked about his upcoming book on the theme of Indo-Pacific with Dr. Rai and Dr. Sinha.





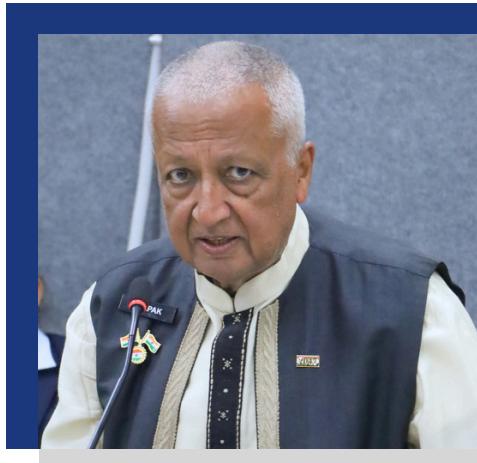
AMB. GURJIT SINGH FORMER AMBASSADOR (VIRTUAL)

Ambassador Gurjit Singh drew on the Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS) Survey report among ASEAN People, which charts India as the last preference for study and tourism, placing India among the bottom ten countries. Many Indian tourists and students are going to ASEAN countries, but not vice-versa. He suggested that, two *elements we need to focus on are increased tourism and people-to-people connections*.

Modi Government's Act East Policy (AEP), and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) are well-crafted policies and are doing well but require more momentum. He appreciated GPF India for creating a platform like IPPF to advance government policy. He said, "Not everything can be left to the government to handle. Otherwise, we continue to have the kind of results Yusuf Isa Institute published." He addressed the lack of focus on strengthening people-to-people connections, contrasting it with the rapid progress in government-to-government connectivity."

He spoke in favour of impact investing, i.e. achieving the SDGs through investment. Countries in the Indo-Pacific should take a real lesson from the outcomes of summits like the G20 and implement them better. According to him, the only thing that can unite people is the collective effort to help each other achieve SDGs through private enterprises and do good for people, as this directly impacts the lives of people. Also, he stressed about improving and promoting cultural & social relations with the people of various countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

AMB. DEEPAK VOHRA, FORMER AMBASSADOR



Ambassador Vohra Said, "We are the children of Chanakya—a great statesman and philosopher." Appreciating the topic and emphasizing the importance of security, he stated that "without security, peace cannot be attained. The first thing Chanakya writes in his classic treatise on polity is that every ruler, government, and state must ensure its security. Without security, peace is impossible!"

He believes that the Indo-Pacific region will face unrest and insecurity. He eloquently stated, "From acceptance, the quality/strength comes," highlighting the importance of recognizing our potential. He suggested, "First find out the way to security, and we will have peace." According to him, it's sequential *Security is followed by Peace and Peace is followed by Prosperity*.

AMB. ANIL TRIGUNAYAT, FORMER AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Trigunayat started the talk with a very important reminder of an unnoticed action: "We talk of establishing peace but we are heading for war and preparing for the same." Stressing the need to call out the behaviours of dominant countries asserting power in other territories, India has to be double-prepared. To tackle problems with land borders and maritime boundaries, India needs to be a resident power in the Indian Ocean.

Drawing upon India's stand for global commons, global goods, and global welfare, he urged all to find convergences despite differences, as a way out of these emerging issues.

He suggested that increased connectivity will enable commerce and the confluence of ideas will bring peace. For this, communication is a must. He ended his speech by drawing upon S Jai Shankar's 3 M's: Mutual Sensitivity, Mutual Interests, and Mutual Respect, which are essential at every level to maintain a healthy bond with any country.

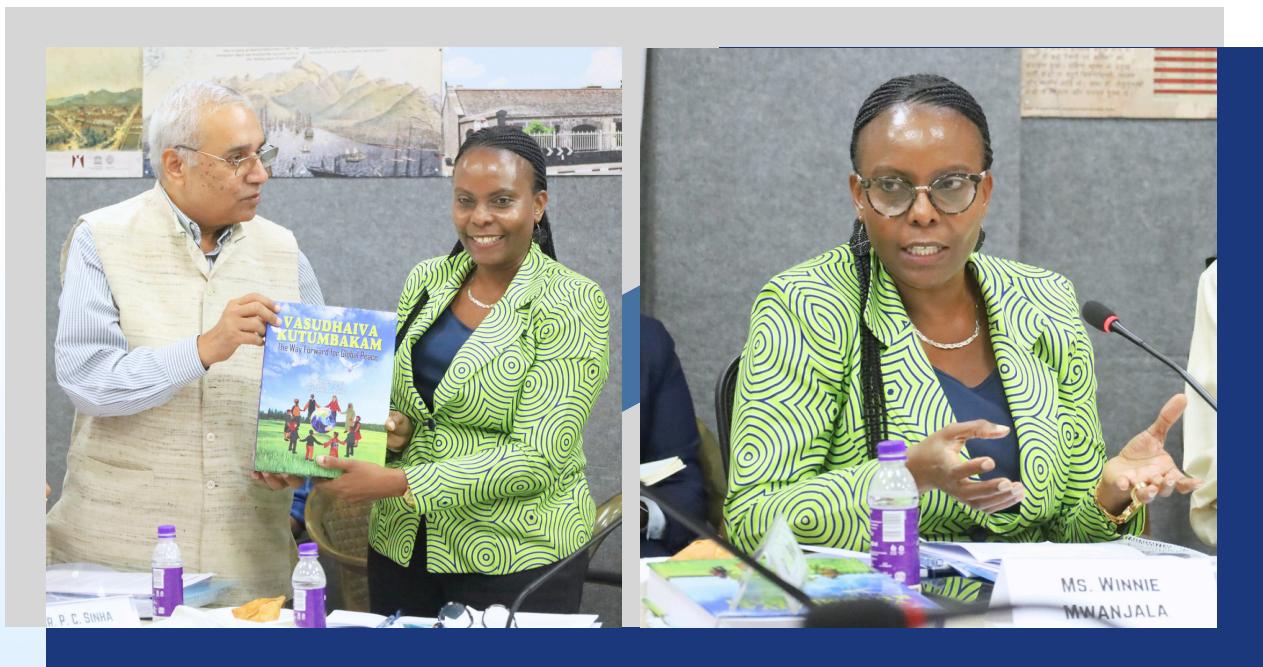


AMB. SUSHIL KUMAR SINGHAL, FORMER AMBASSADOR



Ambassador Singhal emphasized the significance of the Indo-Pacific Ocean from India's viewpoint, especially given its limited resources. Reflecting on India's illustrious past of leadership in the Indian Ocean for 40 to 50 years, he expressed concern over China's current dominance in the region. He highlighted India's soft power, which is recognized globally, positioning India as a central player in international strategies. He underscored India's commitment to a rule-based global order that respects international norms and allows for cooperative engagement.

He proposed that public-private partnerships are essential for managing limited resources. As an NGO, it is crucial for GPF India to support and enhance government policies.



WINNIE MWANJALA HEAD OF CHANCERY, KENYA

Winnie recommended concentrating on improving infrastructure, guaranteeing security, utilizing technology, and nurturing partnerships between India and Kenya. Kenya looks forward to involving more African countries in these conversations within a multilateral framework. There is an urgent need for reforms to address emerging challenges, allowing the multilateral system to more effectively tackle issues relevant to the Global South, especially in developing areas like Africa and Asia. Furthermore, reforming the financial system is essential.



PROF. AJAY KUMAR DUBEY

CENTRE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, SIS, JNU

Professor Dubey addressed security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region as critically important for all nations involved. The region holds significant prominence, serving as a focal point for the foreign policies of powerful countries. India must assume a robust and influential role within this context. As major powers seek to partner with India, it faces emerging competition and challenges that necessitate a stronger position on all fronts. The concept of the Strings of Pearls is a pressing issue, but it is essential to recognize that it is not solely an Indian concern.

In relation to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit, he noted that his vision for developing the Asia-Africa growth corridor did not specifically address security issues.

He stated that our main focus should be on development and the necessity for individual security. By concentrating on what truly matters, we can achieve progress, and peace will naturally follow.

He also pointed out that 50% of the Indian Diaspora is along the Indian Ocean. There is a need for people-to-people connections among 34 countries in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific. Our social and heritage capital will give us strength, not just to ignite development but also to partner in peacebuilding.

DR. ASHOK PANDEY, TRUSTEE, GPF INDIA



Dr. Ashok Pandey emphasized the region's rich diversity and geopolitical importance, highlighting maritime relationships and the seamless connectivity India benefits from due to its extensive global diaspora. He pointed out that now may be the perfect time to adopt transformative education and promote peace through learning. The significance of moral and educational leadership—including principals, teachers and scholars—has grown increasingly important in preventing conflicts. This type of leadership is essential in fostering environments where human rights are recognized, socio-emotional learning takes precedence, conflicts are averted, and disagreements are handled with empathy and compassion.

His presentation focused on four key points:

- (1) Elevating human consciousness
- (2) Engaging younger generations in peace-building efforts
- (3) Peace-building through peace education and conflict prevention
- (4) Hope serves as a substitute for achievements; education is the means to foster that hope.

He advocated for aligning education with this vision, noting that national policy has explicitly addressed sustainable development goals and the advancement of global citizenship education. He advocated for the necessity to transform the educational process.

He suggested the following ways to adapt :

- Promoting regional partnerships through educational exchange initiatives and cross-cultural programs.
- The India-Pacific exchange for teachers and academics can significantly contribute to fostering long-term peace. Empowering youth as Peace Ambassadors and utilizing technology—such as digital education and online courses—can enhance cultural understanding and support the development of future generations.
- Call to Action: Let us advocate for peace education and nurture leadership development grounded in moral and innovative principles. Emphasizing the creation of a community of peace practitioners may serve as a soft power solution to address this challenge.

DR. MONISH TOURANGBAM

DIRECTOR, KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDO-PACIFIC STUDIES (VIRTUAL)



Dr. Monish discussed the vastness of the region and the opportunities it presents. He also highlighted the challenges and risks that lie ahead, particularly those emerging in the subregions. These challenges stem from the regional implications of the behaviour of great powers. He aimed to draw attention to the importance of trusting new technology—specifically the supply chains associated with it, which are currently under scrutiny. Can we develop reliable technology and ensure that the supply chains are equally trustworthy?

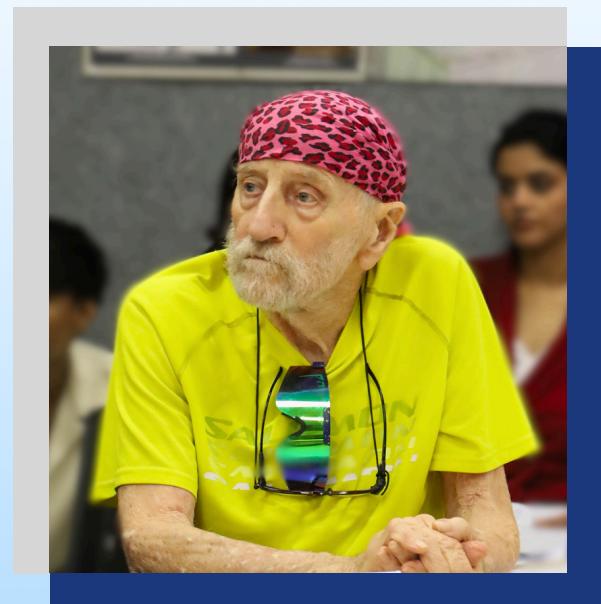
A major challenge, according to him, is ensuring trusted technology and supply chains. India is in a viable position in terms of being a messenger of peace and creating new norms of order. He brought to the forefront the civil unrest in India's neighbours like Myanmar and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the recent surge of economic crisis in Bangladesh, and the need to be prepared and take lessons.

He also proposed capitalizing on the economic opportunities presented by the Bay of Bengal region and expressed concerns regarding the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation project, which could encounter obstacles if not given careful attention and if the actions of major powers are not addressed.

DR. GREGORY BERGLUND

AUTHOR

Dr. Berglund recounted his experiences as a former NATO officer and discussed future threats, emphasizing the importance of nuclear management. His reference to the novel 2034 served as a cautionary tale about potential future conflicts.





DR. V.K. GOSWAMI
FOUNDER PRESIDENT,
ENVIRONMENT AND
PEACE FOUNDATION,
FORMER VC
(WING COMMANDER)

Dr. Goswami delivered a compelling presentation on practical approaches to conflict resolution, emphasizing that true peace is rooted in power. For nations to foster peace, they must possess sufficient strength. The Mahabharata exemplified this. Similarly, India's Peace Keeping Force has demonstrated a path to stability in tumultuous regions.

He highlighted the importance of training and education as essential tools for managing conflicts and securing land and maritime boundaries. "Peace cannot be achieved through dialogue alone," he stated. "It demands decisive action. We must face our conflicts head-on and develop the economic, scientific, and diplomatic capabilities needed to achieve global peace."

DR. M.D. THOMAS

DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF
PEACE AND HARMONY



Dr. Thomas highlighted the Indo-Pacific as a model for social harmony and integration, emphasizing that true peace necessitates social and cultural cohesion throughout the region. He encouraged leaders to prioritize the well-being of their communities and cultivate a sense of collective security.



DR. G.V. RAO

VICE PRESIDENT, INDIAN SOCIETY
OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Dr. Rao discussed the significance of marine resources, e-commerce, and peace security, stressing India's responsibility as a regional power in the Indo-Pacific.

MR. SANJAY BHALLA

VICE PRESIDENT, ARSP



Mr. Bhalla underscored India's leadership in promoting Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), emphasizing the strategic significance of maritime boundaries in the Indo-Pacific area.

He also pointed out India's contribution to regional stability through wisdom-based strategies.



SARABJEET SINGH PARMAR
FORMER NAVAL OFFICER

Mr. Parmar emphasized the critical role of military strategy, trust, and commitment in shaping international relations, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

He supported the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative, which aims to enhance regional stability and security.

Parmar pointed to sovereignty as a central issue in many regional disputes, arguing that if sovereignty disputes between countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are resolved internally, these nations could collectively exert diplomatic pressure on China.

This, he suggested, would strengthen their strategic position in addressing broader regional challenges, including China's territorial ambitions.

“India needs a more inclusive approach and to take a lead.”

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND CLOSING NOTES



MR. CHAND BHARDWAJ FOUNDER, GYANAM SUVIGYANAM

The forum also included insightful reflections from other esteemed speakers, such as Chand Bhardwaj, who discussed the right to enlightenment as a fundamental human right. He emphasized that this right should encompass a spiritual dimension to elevate consciousness.



MR. AMIT GUPTA ENTREPRENEUR AND HUMANITARIAN

Amit Gupta posed essential inquiries regarding the impact of the US-China trade war on relations in the Indo-Pacific. He specifically explored how India and other regional countries can capitalize on the changing trade dynamics. Additionally, he raised another important question: how can regional collaboration be utilized to tackle maritime territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea?



DR. P.C. SINHA DIRECTOR, GPF INDIA

He encapsulated the event by expressing gratitude to all attendees and emphasizing the necessity of developing a roadmap for future collaboration rooted in the day's discussions. He conveyed the forum's central message: the significance of unity, cooperation, and shared responsibility within the Indo-Pacific region. His concluding remark, "One Region, One Dream: Peace and Prosperity for All," struck a chord with the participants, who reiterated their dedication to working collectively toward these objectives.

KEY

TAKEAWAYS



- The Indo-Pacific region is central to global strategic discussions, security, peace, and economic collaboration.
- It's essential to transcend conventional security methods by considering alternatives such as multilateral cooperation, peer-to-peer connections, and impact investing.
- India's leadership in the area is vital, particularly concerning maritime security, a rules-based global order, and promoting cultural exchanges.

The workshop highlighted the significance of involving youth and facilitating cross-border educational exchanges to establish enduring peace in the Indo-Pacific.

CONCLUSION

The workshop titled, "Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific" served as an effective platform for sharing insights on regional security, cooperation and development. The conversations emphasized the importance of multilateralism, strategic foresight, and a holistic approach to peace and security, highlighting India's role as a pivotal leader in these initiatives. With efforts such as the Indo-Pacific Peace Forum and the guiding principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, there is significant potential to cultivate lasting peace and prosperity in the region.

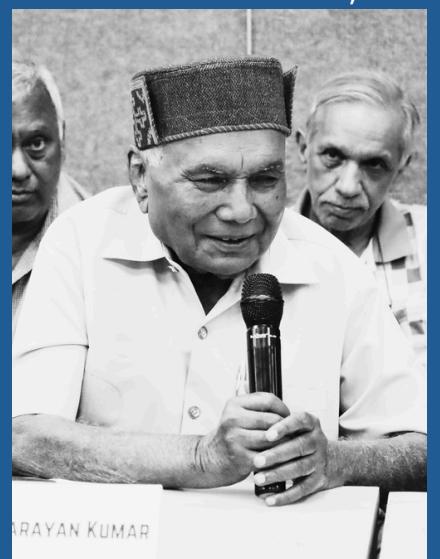
Key Suggestions and Recommendations

- Establish a core research team with ARSP to tackle Indo-Pacific challenges.
- Create actionable roadmaps that emphasize peace, security, and regional collaboration.
- Submit the workshop report to Indian ministries, including the Ministry of External Affairs, to seek policy support and implementation.
- The book *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* is being translated into regional languages of India to foster the philosophy of global peace and interconnectedness among varied communities.



VOTE OF THANKS

DR. NARAYAN KUMAR
HONORARY DIRECTOR, ARSP



Dr. Kumar suggested enhancing collaborations with Indian ministries and translating the texts of the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Book into regional languages to promote deeper understanding.

ONE REGION, ONE DREAM

PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL



Dr. Markandey Rai



Dr. Shyam Parande



Dr. Priya Ranjan Trivedi



Amb. Shashank



Amb. Virendra Gupta



Winnie Mwanjala



Amb. Gurjit Singh



Dr. G.V. Rao



Amb. Anil Trigunayat



Dr. Gregory Berglund



Dr. V.K. Goswami



Amb. Sushil Kumar Singhal



Prof. Ajay Kumar Dubey



Sarabjeet Singh Parmar



Dr. Ashok Pandey

ONE REGION, ONE DREAM PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL



Dr. Monish Tourangbam



Dr. M.D. Thomas



Mr. Sanjay Bhalla



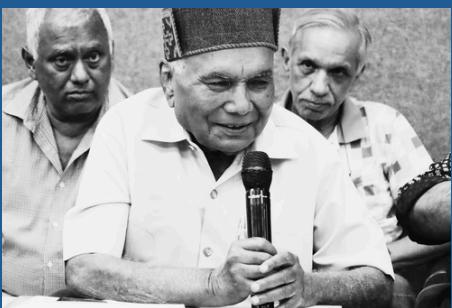
Amb. Deepak Vohra



Mr. Chand Bhardwaj



Mr. Amit Gupta



Dr. Narayan Kumar



Dr. G.V. Rao



Dr. P.C. Sinha



GPF India Organising Team