

# **SIRP Student Study Tour to Delhi NCR**

March 20- March 30, 2023

## **Report**

From March 20 to March 30, 2023, a group of 17 third-semester MA students and three faculty members from the School of International Relations and Politics at Mahatma Gandhi University embarked on an academic study trip to Delhi NCR. The primary objective of the trip was to provide students with exposure to various institutions, scholars, and professionals in the fields of international relations, politics, defense, human rights and public policy. During the trip, the group visited seven prominent institutions, participated in interactive sessions, and gained valuable insights into the workings of these organizations. In addition to visiting prominent institutions, the group also explored key historical and cultural sites in Delhi and its surrounding areas, enriching their understanding of the region's history, culture, and heritage.

## **Institutional Visit and Interaction**

### **1.Nehru Memorial Library and Museum**

On March 23rd the group began their study trip with a visit to the Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, a prestigious institution dedicated to preserving the legacy of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. The students and faculty had the opportunity to interact with Dr. Nisar Kizhakkayil, a Research Officer at the institution. Dr.Kizhakkayil provided insights into the historical context and significance of the artifacts and documents preserved at the museum. The group also explored the extensive library and research facilities, which house a wealth of primary and secondary sources on Indian history and politics.



## 2.Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)

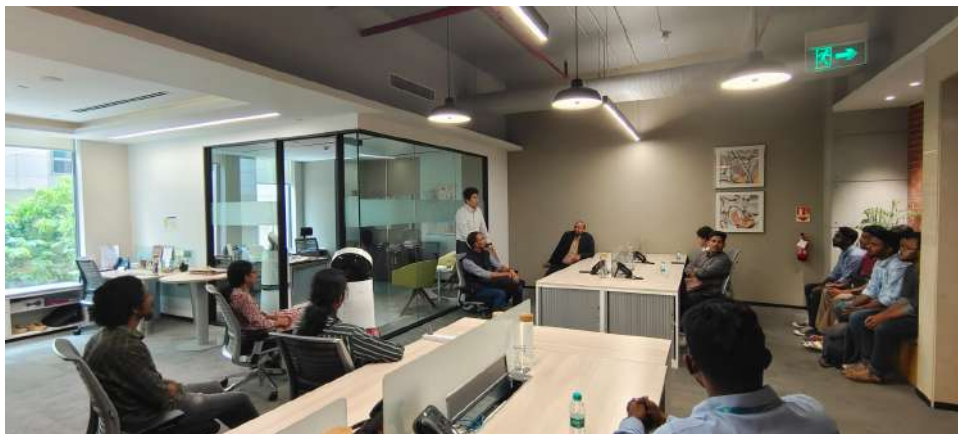
The next destination on the itinerary was the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses. The students and faculty participated in an interactive session with the Director General, Amb. SujanChinoy, and other scholars at the institute. The discussion covered various aspects of defense policies, strategic issues, and regional security concerns. The session provided the group with a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in formulating and implementing international strategies and policies. Amb. Chinoy also briefed the students about various career opportunities available for students at IDSA and in the international and strategic studies think tanks in India. The team also toured MP-IDSA library and had free-wheeling interaction with several scholars of MP-IDSA, including Col. DPK Pillay, Dr.Uttam Sinha, Dr.Rajeesh Kumar, Dr. Deepika Sarasawat, among others.





### **3.Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) - Delhi Office**

The group then visited the Delhi office of the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy. They engaged in a lively discussion with the Director, Dr. CHO Chungjae, who provided an overview of the institution's research activities, focusing on economic policy, trade relations, development issues and India-Korea Relations. The interaction gave the students and faculty valuable insights into the intricacies of international economic policy and the role of think tanks in shaping public policy and various aspects of India-Korea relations.





#### 4. Korean Cultural Centre New Delhi

The Korean Cultural Centre in New Delhi was the next stop, where the group interacted with diplomats from the Republic of Korea and officials from the Centre. This visit offered a unique opportunity to understand the cultural and diplomatic ties between India and South Korea. The students and faculty also had the chance to view a Korean Buddhist Art Exhibition and explore the facilities at the Centre, which showcased various aspects of Korean culture.



## 5. Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

The fifth institution visited was the Research and Information System for Developing Countries. The group met with the Director General, Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, and were introduced to the research facilities at the institution. Additionally, they had the rare opportunity to interact with IBSA Fellows from India, Brazil, and South Africa, gaining insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by developing countries in an increasingly globalized world. During the visit the Prof. Chaturvedi briefed the students about G20 and India's Outlook during its G20 Presidency, Global South Cooperation and the need to reimagine the International Relations curriculum by giving more importance to issues of development with a Global South Perspective. Other RIS faculties present at the meeting were Dr. Sabyasachi Saha-Associate Professor, Prof. T.C.James- Visiting Fellow, Dr.Sayantana Ghosal, Consultant.



## 6. Indian Social Institute (ISI)

On March 27, the group visited the Indian Social Institute, a research and training center that focuses on social issues and promotes sustainable development. The students and faculty had the opportunity to interact with the Director, Fr. Denzil Fernandes, who shared valuable insights about the institute's work on social justice, human rights, and capacity building for marginalized communities.

During the interaction, Fr. Fernandes explained the significance of interdisciplinary research in addressing contemporary social challenges and the role of academic institutions in empowering communities. The students and faculty engaged in a lively discussion on various topics, including the impact of globalization on vulnerable populations, strategies for inclusive growth, and the importance of collaboration among different stakeholders in addressing social issues.

The visit to the Indian Social Institute provided the group with a broader understanding of the complexities of social issues and the importance of integrating social perspectives into international relations and policy-making.





## 7. School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)

The group visited the School of International Studies (SIS) at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), one of India's leading institutions for research and higher learning in the fields of international relations and politics. The students and faculty members had the opportunity to interact with Dean Srikanth Kondapalli, other faculty members, and students at SIS.

The meeting with faculty members offered valuable insights into the academic programs, research initiatives, and the interdisciplinary approach adopted by the School of International Studies. The students were able to engage in discussions on various topics, ranging from global political developments to India's foreign policy and international relations strategies.

Additionally, the group had the chance to explore the JNU campus, which is known for its lush greenery, vibrant student community, and a rich tradition of academic excellence. The visit to JNU allowed the students to gain a broader perspective on the academic environment and opportunities available for pursuing advanced studies in international relations and politics in India.





**Conference: "Digital India: Empowerment and Transformation", organised by Policy Circle at India International Centre on March 25, 2023.**

On March 25, 2023, the students and faculty attended a conference titled "Digital India: Empowerment and Transformation" organized by Policy Circle at the India International Centre. The conference brought together experts from academia, industry, and government to discuss the impact of digital technology on India's development, social and economic empowerment, and governance.

The conference featured several panel discussions and presentations, covering topics such as digital infrastructure, e-governance, data privacy, cybersecurity, and the role of digital technology in bridging the urban-rural divide. The students and faculty members had the opportunity to engage with the speakers, ask questions, and participate in the discussions.

The conference provided the group with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of Digital India initiatives. The students gained valuable insights into the potential of digital technology in transforming various sectors, including education, healthcare, and governance, and the need for collaboration between different stakeholders to maximize its benefits.

The experience at the conference highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary knowledge and the role of technology in shaping the future of international relations and politics. The students and faculty left the conference with a deeper appreciation of the complexities of digital transformation and its potential impact on India's development and global standing.



### **SIRP Alumni -Student Interaction**

On March 27, 2023, the group participated in the SIRP Alumni Student Interaction held at the JNU Convention Centre Lawn. The event brought together the current MA Students of SIRP with distinguished alumni of the School of International Relations and Politics, who now hold key positions in various academic institutions and organizations.

Participants in the interaction included Prof. AK Ramakrishnan, Professor at JNU; Prof. Mathew Joseph, Professor at Jamia Milia Islamia; Prof. K.B Usha, Professor at JNU; Prof. T.G Suresh, Professor in the Department of Political Studies at JNU; Dr.Reji K. Joseph,

Associate Professor at ISID; Ms. Elizabeth; Dr. Vinayan; Mr. Giby, formerly with the Australian Embassy in New Delhi; Dr. Vinayan; Dr. Shabeer, and many others.

The alumni shared their experiences and insights on a wide range of topics, such as career paths in international relations, research opportunities, and the evolving landscape of international politics. The interaction provided the students with valuable advice on pursuing careers in academia, diplomacy, and policy-making, and highlighted the importance of networking and staying informed about current global affairs.

The informal setting of the JNU Convention Centre Lawn provided an excellent atmosphere for students and alumni to engage in meaningful conversations and learn from each other's experiences. The event also facilitated the development of connections between the students and alumni, paving the way for future collaborations and mentorship opportunities.

The event also featured music with songs sung by alumni and students, creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for all participants. The informal setting of the JNU Convention Centre Lawn provided an excellent opportunity for students and alumni to engage in meaningful conversations and was a great opportunity to listen to the alumni about their academic and professional experiences. As the evening progressed, everyone enjoyed dinner together, fostering a sense of camaraderie and community among the attendees.



## **Other Prominent Places and Historical Sites Visited:**

### **India Habitat Centre (IHC)**

On March 27, the group visited the India Habitat Centre, a multidisciplinary cultural and intellectual hub that hosts events, exhibitions, and seminars on various subjects, including international relations, politics, and social issues. The India Habitat Centre is known for its collaborative approach, bringing together individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds to engage in dialogue and promote the exchange of ideas.

### **India International Centre (IIC)**

The group visited the India International Centre, a prestigious cultural and intellectual hub that hosts a variety of events, including conferences, seminars, and exhibitions related to international relations, politics, and social issues. The IIC is known for fostering dialogue and collaboration between individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds, promoting the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

At the IIC, the students and accompanying faculty members had the opportunity to interact with Prof. Ashis Nandy, a renowned Indian sociologist and political psychologist. Prof. Nandy engaged the group in a thought-provoking discussion on various aspects of global politics, culture, and society, sharing his unique perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in the field of international relations.



### **Cultural Visit to Dilli Haat, INA**

As part of the cultural experience, the group visited Dilli Haat, a vibrant open-air market in the heart of Delhi. Dilli Haat serves as a hub for traditional arts, crafts, and culinary delights from different regions of India. The market showcases the rich cultural diversity of the country, with artisans and vendors from various states presenting their unique products, such as handloom textiles, traditional jewelry, handicrafts, and pottery.

The visit to Dilli Haat provided the students with an opportunity to experience the local culture and interact with artisans and craftsmen, learning about the intricacies of their craft and the stories behind their creations. Moreover, the students enjoyed sampling the wide array of regional cuisines, which offered a sensory journey through the diverse culinary heritage of India.

**India Gate:** The group visited the iconic India Gate, a war memorial dedicated to the Indian soldiers who lost their lives during World War I and the Third Anglo-Afghan War. The students and faculty members paid their respects to the fallen soldiers and learned about the monument's historical significance.

**Raisina Hill:** The students and faculty visited Raisina Hill, the location of the Presidential Residence (Rashtrapati Bhavan), Parliament House, and several other government buildings.

The group gained an understanding of the historical and architectural significance of these structures, as well as their roles in Indian governance.



Jama Masjid and Red Fort Area: The group toured the Jama Masjid, one of India's largest mosques, and the Red Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. These visits provided the students with insights into the rich history, culture, and architectural splendour of the Mughal era.





**Qutub Minar and Mehrauli Archaeological Complex:** The students also visited the Qutub Minar and the adjoining Mehrauli Archaeological Complex. The Qutub Minar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the tallest brick minaret in the world and an outstanding example of



Indo-Islamic architecture. The Mehrauli Archaeological Complex houses several historical monuments, tombs, and ruins that span different periods of Indian history, providing the students with a glimpse into the region's diverse cultural heritage.



**Humayun's Tomb:** The students and faculty visited Humayun's Tomb, another UNESCO World Heritage site, and learned about its historical significance and unique architectural features that exemplify the grandeur of Mughal architecture.



**Lodhi Garden Complex:** The group explored the Lodhi Garden Complex, which houses several historical monuments, tombs, and structures from the Lodhi and Sayyid dynasties. This visit allowed the students to appreciate the artistic and architectural achievements of these medieval Islamic dynasties.

**Nizamuddin Dargah:** The students and faculty visited the Nizamuddin Dargah, the mausoleum of the revered Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. This visit offered the group a glimpse into the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Sufi community in India.

**Agra Fort:** The group visited the Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a prime example of Mughal architecture. The students and faculty explored the fort's various structures and learned about its historical significance as a center of Mughal power.

**Taj Mahal:** The highlight of the trip was a visit to the Taj Mahal, one of the world's most famous architectural wonders and a symbol of love. The group marveled at the beauty of the monument and gained insights into its history and construction.

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