NORDIC
INDIA
DIALOGUE

10–11 SEPTEMBER 2026, NEW DELHI

REPORT

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Introduction

The third edition of the Nordic India Dialogue was successfully held on 10th & 11th September at The Claridges, New Delhi. This closed door Track 1.5 Dialogue was curated & convened by Ananta Centre, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Institute of International Affairs of Iceland, and the Technical University of Denmark, in collaboration with respective foreign ministries.

The Dialogue commenced with a keynote address by Shri Pabitra Margherita, Minister of State for External Affairs of India, followed by rich discussions on mobility pathways, the tech ecosystem, geospatial cooperation, Arctic and Indo-Pacific, the future of the global order, and our shared love for food. It brought together over 75 senior government representatives, industry leaders, and domain experts from India, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark. A working group on Technology Cooperation was concluded and a working group on Green Hydrogen as well as a biannual NID Bulletin was established.

Programme Report

Keynote Address by Shri Pabitra Margherita, Minister of State for External Affairs

ELEVATION TO A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

- At the Third Nordic-India Summit, the relationship with all five Nordic countries was elevated to a green technology and innovation strategic partnership. Each country also has a distinct and deepening partnership with India: green technology with Norway and Denmark, innovation and artificial intelligence (AI) with Sweden, digitalisation and circular economy with Finland, and geothermal and blue economy with Iceland.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

- The two sides are natural partners, bound by democracy, the rule of law, and a shared commitment to multilateralism. They meet at a time of global geopolitical flux, which India reads as a reason to widen the circle of partners it can depend on.

PACE OF GROWTH IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Over the last decade, India's trade with the Nordic region has grown roughly four-fold, and Nordic investment into India is rising by about 200% over the past decade. The dialogue format is only eight years old, and it is rare for diplomacy to compound this quickly.

SCIENTIFIC CLOSENESS

- India and the Nordic countries are far apart on the map but close in ecology and scientific research. Activities in each other's geographies, marked by the Arctic and the Himalayas, have a direct impact on everyday lives.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL COOPERATION

- There is a risk of AI becoming the property of a handful of countries and companies, so access to computing, talent, and data has to be broadened. Some Nordic countries make the same argument, and safe access to the digital space is seen as a prerogative of India's developmental vision.
- Nordic countries run their data centres on clean power. Cooperation now goes well beyond software services into digital public infrastructure, 6G, and quantum research, with hundreds of companies and startups working in each other's markets.

Session 1: The Future of the Global Order

RULES-BASED ORDER AND WAY FORWARD

Rule-breaking and uncertainty

- The problem is not the rules but rule breaking, behaviour has changed while the rules remain the same. The ability to hold great powers accountable is limited. Rule-breaking can still be pointed out and spoken against, showing that dissent exists. Coalitions of middle powers, and of small and middle powers, are needed to keep the momentum. These conversations must be continued, not avoided.
- Given the increased uncertainty, rules and traditional partnerships cannot be banked upon. Focus on forming partnerships is therefore growing.
  - For Nordics, a cause for pessimism is that their biggest neighbour has attacked another neighbour, blatantly breaking international rules.
  - The Nordics are fairly like-minded, but the path to more cooperation runs through Europe.

Preservation of rules-based order

- Many rules are unfair and the post-1945 order has benefited some countries more than others. But the most basic ones such as prohibition of the use of force and World Trade Organisation practices are important. Assuming the rules-based order is fundamentally unfair or disappearing is itself a danger. The question is how to pool resources and political mobilisation to preserve the most important rules and reduce uncertainty.

India's perspective

- The loss of a familiar world order may be mourned, but this is also a moment to shape a future one. With 1.4 billion people, India's development and strategic needs are a marker for how the world moves forward. Given India's stage of development, the current changes are destabilising and add to uncertainty, but it also opens up opportunities that did not exist earlier, for example:
  - A circular economy forum in Gujarat with the Nordic countries.
  - Access to a polar research vessel, hopefully by 2029.
- More than 70% of world trade still happens under WTO rules. India is also working hard to preserve the rules-based order through free trade agreements (FTAs).

Reform

- Composition of governing bodies, such as the UN Security Council.
- Voting shares at the IMF and the World Bank.
- A closer look is required for reparations, allocation of responsibility, and transfer of resources with regard to climate change.
- BRICS' New Development Bank could become a real contender among future multilateral development banks.

Hedging and interdependence

- Managing weaponised interdependence requires reconfiguring relations between states, and between government and business internally, as rivalry plays out in technology, trade, and export controls.
- Talk of de-dollarisation reflects a search for options to hedge against a weaponised dominance.
- Every country advocates "make in my country", but no country can do it all. Each must develop its unique value proposition for the world.
- There is an opportunity to find alternatives to monopolies built on raw materials or technology. For example, The Nordics value being part of India's digital stack, as it reduces reliance on big US tech companies and Chinese state-led models.

The wars

The Russia-Ukraine war and the West Asia (US-Iran) conflict could destabilise far more than anticipated. Neither shows signs of ending, largely because every side believes it is winning. No party cedes ground; hitting warships and oil tankers, or sending missiles into civilian centres, is considered acceptable because each side believes one more push will succeed. How the rest of the world responds will determine the direction of the global economy. States are hedging and forming new partnerships rather than turning inwards.

INDIA'S PRIVATE SECTOR

Alignment between industry and government

- From an Indian perspective, the relationship between industry and government has never been as important as it is today. Previously, each could operate independently; now alignment is critical. Indian industry recognises that it must participate in building the nation, core capability, and competence.
  - Industry must understand where the government is heading from a long-term strategic perspective.
  - The government must understand where industry is competitive and what it needs to be differentiated.

Ease of doing business

- India's ranking is 63. India is large, and the average masks pockets where ease of doing business is much better; more uniformity is desirable.
- The challenges of bureaucracy and laws may be exaggerated. Work is possible within constraints such as land acquisition and labour laws, provided there is willingness to take risks and not expect cost-plus arrangements with profits protected.

Innovation

- India spends 0.2% of revenue on R&D, among the lowest in the world. Capital costs in India continue to remain relatively high, constraining investment and risk-taking.
- Innovation starts with the private sector defining a challenge or opportunity. Massive demand leaves too little time for innovation. Whether policy reforms must come first, or whether the private sector itself should drive the demand for greater innovation and more patient capital is debatable. The government's share of innovation spending exceeds that of the private sector. Given the scale of opportunities available, the Indian private sector needs to demonstrate greater ambition and risk-taking.
- A structure combining industry and academic institutions can be built without governmental action as showcased in the Nordic region.

Indian manufacturing

- What has taken India this far will not take it through the coming decades. Making more steel, cement, and cars is insufficient. Electronics is one of the world's largest traded items; India has missed out on this opportunity and is now playing catch up. The government is

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making an effort, and Indian industry should embrace some of that risk.
- The Nordic region appreciates China's manufacturing capability. India must showcase that it is not inferior in mass manufacturing. Indian manufacturing has dramatically leapfrogged over the last 10 years. Nordic contribution to India's advanced manufacturing base and ecosystem will also help the Nordics diversify supply chains and reduce dependencies and concentrations.

ENERGY

Transition and dependency
- The Nordics have an interest in enabling a long-term transition to green and renewable energy including reducing dependencies on Russian fossil fuels.
- India's position: it is not a dependency; India makes sovereign choices, with an oil basket of about 40 countries.

India's energy needs
- India has outstripped its green energy goals, and its energy growth is mainly renewable.
- India's embrace of green energy is remarkable; the common man strongly understands the need to use and conserve clean energy, and the clean energy share of the mix is high.
- Demand from 1.4 billion people and a fast-moving economy means fossil fuel cannot be done away with for the foreseeable future.

Arctic hydrocarbons
- The EU supports a ban on further Arctic oil and gas development and will not purchase such hydrocarbons.
- Norway, Europe's biggest gas supplier, has been pushing the EU to drop the moratorium.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

Primary education
- Early and primary education sets the tone for all further development and innovation. Nordic innovation in early education, particularly in Finland, is top of the world. India's situation differs; for example in its linguistic diversity, but there is a great deal to learn and to combine in this area to set the country up for the future.

Urbanisation
- India is urbanising at an incredible and chaotic rate. The aspired urbanisation, tailored to Indian reality, can learn much from Nordic countries.

The Arctic
- India is not Arctic-adjacent but is Arctic-aspiring. The next generation of connectivity, research, science, and security converges at the poles. The Nordic partnership gives India entry into this new world of research, innovation, and technology.

Health innovation
- As India's population will grow older, it will need very different medical and technological interventions. One relevant area is non-communicable diseases. The difference health innovation makes is visible, but not yet at scale. Close work is possible with Nordic countries and Europe in this domain.

Research
- There is an opportunity to increase research cooperation between the Nordics and India.
- Drivers:
  - Indian researchers face visa problems to go to the US.
  - Nordic institutions that relied on Chinese researchers now face increased scrutiny.
  - Cooperation should extend beyond STEM to the social sciences and humanities.

Defence
- There is scope for greater India-Nordic defence cooperation, for example through NORDEFCO (Nordic Defence Cooperation). It could involve bringing in Nordic technology and manufacturing in India.
- India has military representation only with Sweden, through a defence attaché, and is seeking defence technologies.
- An added Nordic motivation is to reduce India's defence cooperation with Russia.
- At the operational level:
  - The Indian Armed Forces could gain experience in cold weather operations, particularly in the navies, and in shallow water Anti-Submarine Warfare.
  - Nordic countries could gain experience in tropical waters in the Indian Ocean.

Session 2: From the Arctic to the Indo-Pacific

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Around 2007–2008, climate change was considered the defining challenge for the future of the planet, and the Arctic was at the heart of that discussion. Climate change was taking place three to four times more rapidly in the Arctic than elsewhere. The melting of sea ice and other cryospheric parts of the Arctic had implications not only in the Arctic but around the globe.

- Efforts began by promoting scientific collaboration on the cryosphere in the Himalayas, since methods developed in studying the Arctic cryosphere could be relevant and helpful there. This led to collaboration between the Arctic and Asia, with data collected in the Arctic being used to understand what is happening in Asia.
  - Leading Indian scientists, for example, present data from their research stations in Svalbard showing how melting Arctic sea ice fundamentally affects monsoon rain in South Asia. This has implications for food production for millions of people.
  - India has been a very constructive partner in collecting data in the Arctic and contributed to the Mosaic Expedition.
- In South Asia, water resources are the issue most prone to creating conflict, as the water treaties between India and Pakistan and between India and Bangladesh show. Collaboration to create data on challenges such as water availability is a prime case of creating a collective public good that countries in conflict would still find valuable to share.
- The Arctic Circle Assembly was first convened in 2013, the same moment the Arctic Council accepted a number of Asian powers as observer states. The Assembly became a venue where Asian leaderships could present their projects and scientific research on the Arctic.

NORDIC PERSPECTIVE ON ARCTIC GOVERNANCE

- The Arctic is home to 10% of the Nordic population and a large part of its landmass and seas, which makes this area of strategic interest. They appreciate cooperation with India on Arctic issues in the Arctic Council, where India is an observer, and on research in Svalbard. India brings perspectives on climate change from the Indo-Pacific, which helps make linkages on global issues. The intent has always been to keep the Arctic a low-tension area.
- The Arctic Council was a remarkably successful wisely and loosely designed arrangement for international collaboration. It grew out of a non-governmental effort to study pollution in the Arctic and how pollutants migrate between countries, and it later became concerned with other dimensions of climate change.
- Its working groups, with representatives from different countries, studied shared environmental problems and published reports, some of remarkably high quality, which became the basis for policymaking in different countries.
- As a consequence of the war in Ukraine, the Arctic Council is no longer functioning as a diplomatic entity. Some working groups are reportedly still working, which is encouraging, but its future hangs in the balance.
- Even when diplomatic relations are frozen and political confrontations are at a high, collaboration on pure science is the relationship with the best hope of surviving.

SECURITY

Global order and uncertainty
- All five Nordic countries are now NATO members, and concerned about Russia. At the same time, they cannot be sure the United States will be around when needed. This creates huge uncertainty for NATO, Europe and the Nordic countries.
- There is a prospect of a US–Russia G2, and of a US–China G2. The parameters and foundations of security policy are becoming uncertain for both the Nordic countries and India, though the concerns differ.

India as a Net Security Provider in the Indian Ocean Region
- India follows a philosophy of cooperative security and shaping a favourable maritime security environment. It has contributed more than 300,000 troops to UN missions. It responded in Bangladesh (1971) and the Maldives (1988), and after the December 2004 tsunami it deployed 29 ships and 5,000 personnel in the first 36 hours across four countries. It has since averaged four to five HADR missions a year outside India.
- Since 2008, Indian ships have been deployed continuously for anti-piracy duty in the Gulf of Aden, where piracy cost the global economy about $18 billion a year at its peak. Multiple actors contributed, but the Indian Navy foiled the most attacks (45, of which 38 were outside the Gulf of Aden). It also conducts joint patrols with Mauritius, Seychelles and the Maldives. When piracy resurged with the Houthis, the entire fleet was diverted from exercises and piracy was cracked in three months, versus two-and-a-half years the previous time. Piracy has resurfaced in recent months. In March 2024 the Indian Navy rescued the crew of MV True Confidence and saved the ship, earning International Maritime Organization recognition. India supplies 16% of the world's seafarers and one-third of crew in the Indian Ocean region.
- India has an international fusion centre modelled on Singapore's, works with the EU's CRIMARIO, and hosts about 15 international liaison officers.

MARITIME TRADE, CHOKEPOINTS AND ROUTES

India's dependence on the sea
- Worldwide, 80–90% of trade by volume is seaborne. For India it is 95%, of which 94% is carried by

foreign-flag vessels. The Indian defence minister has said India is an island nation with land borders, which puts its dependence on the seas in perspective. Secure maritime routes are therefore critical. About 85% of trade travelling through the Indian Ocean region is destined for outside the region, so the global economy is hugely dependent on it.

Current disruptions
- Persian Gulf
- Suez Canal and Red Sea
- Moving goods between India and Europe via the Cape of Good Hope means a 26-day detour, requiring different larger ships and raising costs.

The Northern Sea Route
- The Northern Sea Route has become strategically important because Siberian energy resources (LNG, oil) are shipped towards Asia, dramatically increasing energy transport traffic. It might shorten routes between the Nordic countries and China a little bit. For India, however, if the Suez is ruled out, the difference between the Cape route and the Northern Sea route is only about 5–6%, depending on the coast in India.
- The Arctic opening up for shipping is also a warning sign from the climate perspective.
- A new sea route into a territory largely hostile to the European Union also opens up new challenges.

India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)
- IMEC is difficult to develop because it must pass through West Asia (Middle East), which is unstable. It was planned to run through the UAE, across Saudi Arabia and Israel, and then to Europe. There are tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the Saudis are already working on a bypass line avoiding the UAE altogether. Revival within the coming decade seems unlikely.
- An alternative for connecting India and Europe is needed until reconstruction and peace return to the Gulf. The traditional 500 year-old route south of the Cape of Good Hope is probably far cheaper, and investing in such safer routes is necessary. Connecting India and Europe is even more important after the FTA.

THE CONTAINER SHIPPING INDUSTRY'S VIEW

Industry on the front line
- Shipping companies face the consequences of geopolitical conflicts in Ukraine, Iran, and the Red Sea. By value, European container lines handle 75% of global trade, and four of the world's largest container lines, catering to 80% of the global market, are headquartered in the European Union.
- Maersk has net-zero ambitions for 2040.

Why the Asia-Europe trade lane developed
- The global population base and demand; the Asia-Pacific manufacturing boom of the last 25 years; and 365-day navigability, rule of law, and free passage. Without these, a maritime ecosystem does not develop. That ecosystem includes bunkering, dry docking, afloat repairs, crew changes, and leasing, chartering, and insurance companies.

Hub-and-spoke model
- Container lines work as a hub-and-spoke system: cargo is aggregated from regions through smaller vessels onto a few network hubs, where the biggest vessels call. Jebel Ali handled 16 million TEUs and much Indian cargo went there. Today it is not accessible.

Current stress
- Transshipment capacity is cramped worldwide.
- The priorities are the safety and security of crews, then vessels, then cargo.
- Long-term fixed-price contracts must be honoured despite 300% higher freight rates, exceptionally high insurance costs, multiple crew changes, and a completely different network design.
- All value chains are affected, including pharma and automobiles, not only energy.

SUPPLY-CHAIN CONCENTRATION, CHINA AND DE-RISKING

Concentration risk
- The maritime manufacturing ecosystem is highly centralised: ships are largely built in one country, containers largely in one country, and the most efficient bunkering and repair facilities are in a few places. This creates procurement risk and reduces flexibility during crises such as the Ukraine and Iran wars, and Covid. Creating optionalities is thus important.

China's position
- China cannot be directly replaced by anyone, including Europe, India, or the US. Over 25 years it has built a near-monopoly in rare earths and raw materials, partly by state subsidies that bankrupted competitors.
- It holds about 54% of world shipbuilding, leads in 67 of 74 critical technologies (up from about 55 ten years ago and fewer than five 25 years ago), and has 17 of the world's top 20 ports.
- Naval shipbuilding illustrates the pace: the world standard from launch to commissioning is about 24 months, India did it in 31, and China's latest took 4.5 months.

De-risking
- De-risking is needed by the whole world. India has begun with curbs in critical areas and technologies, but disengagement will be step by step. India is hedging and moving slowly while watching for a sudden US-China G2. This is an opportunity for Europe and the Nordic countries.

Interdependence
- Resilience cannot be 100%. The Nordic countries cannot be resilient alone: 75% of their trade is intra-European, but European trade depends on raw materials and manufacturing concentrated in China, while services (insurance, finance, banking) are concentrated in the West. Nobody is resilient; everyone is hugely interdependent and is merely hedging to gain an advantage.

INDIA'S MARITIME POSITION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Vulnerability
- India is hugely dependent on the international order, which is why it must help strengthen it, and the sea lanes around it must be kept safe as a core national interest.
- Shipbuilding shares: China 54%, South Korea 24%, Japan 14–16%, India 0.9%.
- India's shipping has grown at an average of 3% for 40 years, 0.1% better than the global average. Yet Indian-flag vessels carried 40% of India's trade 40 years ago and carry less than 4% today.

Resurgence of maritime consciousness
- The Sagarmala Programme has built up ports and connectivity, with port capacity up 10x in ten years (a CAGR of about 10.2%).
- India invested heavily in ports, road and rail connectivity, new maritime laws (including the shipping and fishing acts), offshore energy, and a maritime development fund. India exports 25% of the petroleum it imports as refined products because of excess refining capacity.
- India is investing in shipbuilding and needs to expand it.

Building optionalities with Nordic partners
- Vessels are being flagged in India.
- Calculated orders have been placed with Indian shipyards with technology transfer from the Nordic region. The yards were originally naval shipyards with constraints in pricing, OEM tie-ups, and design for commercial work; technology institutes and European OEMs have also collaborated.
- Containers began to be manufactured in India only a few months ago, which is absurd for a country that sends spacecraft to the moon and builds submarines. A Nordic company moved first, bringing together the ecosystem from steel to plywood to paint under a production-linked incentive scheme agreement with the Central government.
- Even a 5% market share could mean several billion dollars of industry setting up facilities in India quickly. The government does its part, but the private sector must also take responsibility.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

Semiconductors and logistics
- A chip may travel six times between Taiwan or the Netherlands and India before becoming a component. Tata Electronics' semiconductor facility in Gujarat, built with partners including those from the Netherlands, showed that logistics is a major challenge since equipment is sensitive to motion, particles, and moisture. Supporting such projects is important.

Ports and green energy
- At least 60% of investment in India's container terminals is from the European Union, and European companies operate some of the most efficient terminals. India can produce some of the cheapest green electrons, and the journey to a green molecule meeting European standards can be done in a port environment. Energy storage at ports would decarbonise operations and make Indian exports more compliant with the EU's carbon border adjustment mechanism, making the FTA more successful.

Session 3: India on the Nordic Menu

With Vir Sanghvi, Chairman, Culinary Culture; Columnist & TV Presenter

EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN RESTAURANT SCENE

- Over the last 20 years, Indian cuisine has changed substantially: more people have entered the restaurant business, breaking the old, formulaic Punjabi style menu.
- The restaurant business growth has occurred along two parallel tracks: increased availability of international cuisines, and a renewed domestic love for India's own regional cuisines.

HOME COOKING AND ACCESS TO INGREDIENTS

- At the home-cook level, ingredient availability in India has become close to world-class, even if top tier

specific products (e.g., the very best salmon) aren't always available.
- Sanghvi described a personal experiment: sourcing ingredients for a vol-au-vent stuffed with caviar and cream entirely through Indian delivery apps within 30 minutes, with the dish itself taking only five minutes to prepare. This convenience is driving increased experimentation with international ingredients among Indian home cooks.
- Cited as a market opportunity for foreign food businesses: the French Kaviari house has opened in Mumbai, reflecting rising wealth among upper-middle-class and affluent Indians willing to experiment.

NORDIC INFLUENCE IN INDIAN FINE DINING

- Historically, Indian catering colleges taught French technique (the Escoffier tradition, mother sauces), which never resonated strongly with Indian diners. Italian cuisine (pasta, pizza) was the next major wave of influence in India.
- Today, Scandinavia, and specifically Noma (Copenhagen), has become a dominant reference point; Sanghvi suggested more Indians have worked at Noma than have ever eaten there. Restaurant Frantzén (Stockholm) was also cited as a major influence on Indian chefs, some of whom travel to Stockholm itself rather than its Dubai outpost.
- The so-called "Nordic Manifesto" (associated with Noma) was referenced, characterising much of its stated principles (use only fresh ingredients) as largely self-evident given the price points involved

FERMENTATION AND FORAGING

- Sanghvi noted that, setting aside promotional concepts, foraging and fermentation represent the most impactful global contributions of Nordic culinary practices.
- While foraging presents greater safety challenges in India than in Western nations due to toxicity risks from misidentification, local practitioners are still adopting it.
- India possesses a rich, established fermenting heritage, particularly across the Northeastern states, where Noma's primary fermentation specialist famously travelled to to study local techniques.
- Consequently, contemporary Indian establishments are increasingly incorporating fermentation, drawing inspiration from Scandinavian models rather than purely organic domestic revival.

NORDIC INGREDIENTS AND TRADE HISTORY

- Historically, during periods of restricted trade, Scandinavian goods enjoyed a strong foothold in India through imports like Danish salami, canned sausages, and blue cheese.
- Following market liberalisation in the 1990s, Northern European producers failed to capitalise on this early prominence, creating what Sanghvi considers a major lost commercial opportunity.
- Currently, aquaculture salmon from Norway captures the market due to significant cost advantages over Scottish alternatives, notwithstanding ongoing environmental debates surrounding Norwegian fish farming.
- Since genuine salmon is not indigenous to Indian waters, domestic demand remains almost entirely dependent on overseas suppliers.

INDIA-EU FTA AND FOOD DIPLOMACY

- Regarding the forthcoming EU–India Free Trade Agreement, Sanghvi observed that culinary import duties were traditionally steep. He highlighted that although numerous farm goods are omitted, a considerable range of products is included, promising swift and marked tariff cuts. Sanghvi characterised the shortage of Scandinavian food imports as an unexploited commercial prospect stemming from the collapse of the pre-1991 grey-market supply lines pointing to substantial business possibilities for Northern European suppliers who choose to engage the market.
- State regulatory involvement in gastronomy was characterised by Sanghvi as largely ineffective, consisting primarily of bureaucratic approvals rather than proactive advancement.
- Acclaimed international culinary figures, such as Massimo Bottura, Daniel Humm, and Heston Blumenthal, frequently visit Delhi's Bukhara restaurant and applaud the breadth of Indian cooking, particularly celebrating its grilled specialties beyond typical gravy-based dishes.
- Sanghvi highlighted that, outside of Britain, domestic dining establishments have yet to achieve a widespread global expansion on par with other international culinary traditions. This limitation was attributed to official cultural diplomacy, which has prioritised cinematic outreach while neglecting gastronomy as a vital avenue for diplomatic soft power.

Session 4: Market Access, Two Models: What EFTA and EU Agreements Unlock

NEW TRADE ORDER AND POLITICAL WILL

- The world is in a completely new international trade order. The EU and India share democracy and a belief in the rule-based order, which has been attacked in many ways. This brought them together to provide predictability and legal certainty for businesses.
- For India, trade policy is not just about commercial interests. It is an instrument of national transformation: generating growth, creating jobs, moving up the value chain, and bringing in more capital and human capital by 2047. India's recent FTAs cover almost two-thirds of the globe, in an uncertain world where trusted partners are needed.
- Nordic strengths in maritime, clean energy, blue economy, geothermal energy, and fisheries can combine with India's engineering, digital capabilities, and manufacturing scale, not merely to sell but to co-design, co-develop and co-produce.
- India-Nordic trade of about $19 billion is set to double by 2030, with specific targets with Finland and Norway. India's goods and services exports to Europe exceed $200 billion, and are expected to rise to $500 billion.

INDIA-EFTA TEPA

- The India-EFTA TEPA, already under implementation, celebrated its first anniversary on 1 October 2026.
- It offers 92.2% of tariff lines, covering about 99.6% of India's exports, including all non-agricultural products, plus concessions on processed agricultural products. India offers 82.7% of tariff lines, covering about 95.3% of EFTA imports.
- Sensitive sectors are safeguarded on both sides; the effective duty on gold (imported from Switzerland) remains untouched.
- Opens opportunities in services through digital delivery and commercial presence, greater certainty for temporary entry of professionals, and mutual recognition in nursing, accountancy, and architecture.

The $100 billion commitment
- EFTA countries will invest $50 billion in the first 10 years, and $50 billion in the next five), facilitating 1 million direct jobs.
- In India, the perception is that this makes EFTA the best FTA India has done. But the legal text shows it has two clear conditions: India's GDP growth of at least 9.5% and a return of at least 16% every year. It has big news value but remains aspirational.
- It is a pledge that is not government funded. Multinationals see investment opportunities, legal certainty, and predictability even before an FTA comes into force.

Financing and joint ventures
- Investment happens almost entirely through joint investments and joint ventures.
- Norwegian actors lack the know-how to connect with Indian financial actors; the challenge is to match the right capital to niche technology interests.
- The Norwegian Global Pension Fund is already the second largest foreign institutional investor in India (upwards of $31 billion).

INDIA-EU FTA

- Talks began in 2007, were let go in 2013, restarted in 2022 and concluded at the 16th summit on 27 January 2026. Parliamentary approval is hoped for by December 2026 (The EU-Mercosur agreement fell short by a few votes in the European Parliament).
- The FTA was brought over the line not by pure commercial interest but by very strong political interest. It was not only a negative push from the geopolitical situation; there was a positive dimension of two continents wanting to engage comprehensively. The same issues (such as data security, wines, autos) recurred from the first round of negotiations.
- Both sides have made exemptions for sensitive sectors.
- Hailed by Ursula von der Leyen as the mother of all deals, the biggest FTA the EU or India has entered into: 2 billion people and a quarter of global GDP.
- India gets preferential access across 97% of EU tariff lines, covering about 99.5% of exports by value. India offers 92.1% of its tariff lines, covering 97.5% of EU exports.
- Benefits labour-intensive sectors: textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, marine products, gems and jewellery, sports goods, toys, chemicals, and engineering goods. Gives European companies predictable access to India's market for advanced machinery, medical technology, clean energy systems, and high-quality services.
- Goes beyond tariffs: rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, digital trade, intellectual property, SMEs, and sustainable development.
- About 144 services sub-sectors are covered, with a more assured framework for business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, contractual service suppliers and independent professionals. Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements already exist with Denmark and Finland.

- Separate agreements on investment and geographical indications will follow.

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- CBAM applies to six products (iron/steel, aluminum, cement, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen) but will move forward with a major downstream expansion in the coming years.
- European products would enter India at zero tariff while Indian products face a carbon tax. Apparels, for example, with an 8% tariff coming down to zero, might face a carbon tax of maybe 30%.
- India's carbon price will not be more than $8 to $10 per tonne; China's is about $11; the European permit trades at 75 euros. A country's carbon price is decided by its level of development, and India cannot afford the European level, so it would pay the difference.
- The FTA has a special annex on CBAM, a separately negotiated MoU of about $580 million over two years to help India's industrial transition to a green economy, and an Most Favoured Nation article which means any better condition offered by the EU in any other FTA will be offered to India.
- CBAM can be avoided through clean technology, or waived if producers prove they paid a domestic tax on emissions on par with the CBAM fee. The aim is to incentivise green investment, not raise revenue.
- It is a myth that Indian manufacturing is highly carbon intensive. Many suppliers of castings and parts to Swedish, Danish, and German companies are 100% renewable energy dependent while India added 500 gigawatts of renewable energy in ten years. What MSMEs lack is how to calculate the price of carbon.

INDUSTRY READINESS AND ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

- Indian industry needs CBAM capacity, laboratory standards for testing, skilling for manufacturing, and market access for MSMEs. Exporters must also understand customer behaviour in mature markets.
- Like Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese companies, European suppliers must also map the ecosystems sector by sector.
- The quality of Indian products is not inferior. For example, India produces ten million air conditioners with the same components used in Europe, differing only in the processes.
- With 60% of India's population born after 1995, a clean-sheet model is needed: 'make for India, scale for the world'
- Indian customers want European specifications at below-Chinese prices; many European products are over-engineered.
- European companies are transferring know-how, for instance, through Danfoss's "Green Ask" programme to 200 suppliers.

TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION

- The worry about import surges is not there with the EU or EFTA because of different levels of the value chain. India makes labour-intensive and downstream products (smartphones, pharmaceuticals); Europe is at the high end (precision engineering, advanced medicines, premium chocolates). As India's middle class expands, European and EFTA goods will have a larger market.
- India exports about $70 billion a year to the EU. After the FTA, tariffs of 8–20% on shoes, apparel, and made-ups will become zero, benefiting exporters whose factories have the required certifications.
- To EFTA countries, Indian exports are under $2 billion and imports are about $5 billion, excluding gold which is about $20 billion.
- Indian industry has to master EFTA's compliance requirements, which very few firms have cracked.

STANDARDS, COMPLIANCE, AND CERTIFICATION

- European standards are not seen as impositions; the agreements will help raise standards of production and services in India.
- EFTA is not a less cumbersome route on standards: Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland (EEA members) incorporate all new EU legislations, and Switzerland unilaterally incorporates almost all of them. Essentially, India has to deal with one set of consolidated requirements for both agreements, not 31 national ones.
- Standards translate at factory level into about 15 types of certification. About 1,200 apparel factories (top- and mid-level exporters) are almost certified, but of about 50,000 most may not qualify for exports to Europe.
- Market access on paper is not the same as market entry in practice. Rules of origin must be understood, standards met, certificates recognised, customs procedures efficient, and logistics competitive.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

- India's R&D investment is less than 1% of GDP.
- The Anusandhan Research Foundation provides matching grants, and India's 3,300+ GCCs can plug into it.
- Nordic success rests on a "triple helix" of academia, business and government working in tandem and in the same direction. There is scope for developing a similar ecosystem in India.
- Areas of collaboration include grid management (given 500 gigawatts of renewables) and data centres (water, energy, and thermal management).
- Capital is not the issue; partnership is the new leadership. Successful Nordic companies in India have a trusting and deep partnership with an Indian counterpart, essential in a price-sensitive market. The question is how to improve the chances of more such partnerships in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION AND THE WAY FORWARD

- The two agreements are not competing models but share a strategic logic. They create stable, predictable access, diversify economic partnerships, connect innovation with scale, and build more resilient value chains. India-EFTA TEPA brings an investment commitment in the same agreement. India-EU FTA has no investment pledge but it will operate on a different velocity of scale and depth.
- The MSMEs and startups need more hand-holding. Indian companies should move beyond distributor relationships towards design partnerships, acquisitions, joint ventures, and a local presence in the Nordics. Nordic companies view India as a base for research, engineering, manufacturing, and global delivery.
- A focused India-Nordic implementation agenda should measure success by FTA utilisation, larger and more diversified trade flows, new investments in newer sectors, joint patents, resilient supply chains, professional opportunities, and good quality jobs.
- Companies must be informed about potential opportunities. The EU-India FTA's institutional framework and dispute settlement mechanism as well as the India-EFTA TEPA's institutional mechanism should be a problem-solving platform, not merely a review platform. Implementation is a shared responsibility.

Session 5: India-Nordics Mobility Pathways

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SKILLS CONTEXT

- There are three historical drivers of migration: developmental needs, such as India's IT industry; region-building, such as the Gulf and Singapore; and disruption, such as asylum-related migration. The fourth era is beginning in which the world is ageing (by 2055 there will be more people over 50 than under 18) and AI is shifting economies from mass production to customisation.
- Nordic countries were never an obvious destination for Indians, who traditionally went to the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Early migration often followed family ties, and the numbers were small. Today many arrive for jobs without prior family connections. It was underlined that mobility is now shaped by an era of nationalism and political contention, very different from the globalisation of the 1990s, and that policy must reckon with this new reality.
- Current demand comes from labour shortages and companies seeking growth. Where Nordic employers once asked whether Indians could do engineering work, India is now a major manufacturing base and market for Nordic firms. Indians who have integrated locally are well placed to return and lead those operations.

FOUR MOBILITY PATHWAYS

- Student mobility, historically driven by language and cultural familiarity.
- Vocational mobility, as in German and Japanese training programmes.
- Skilled worker mobility, typically enabled by multinationals.
- Small and medium business mobility, which is the least developed because the cost of finding partners and execution is high.

FROM AGREEMENTS TO EXECUTION

- India has signed 28 migration and mobility partnership agreements. The solution to convert these into action is to involve the private sector and run "lighthouse pilots" to build confidence so that mobility is structured and not dependent on serendipity.
- Scaling mobility requires reducing the cost of search and friction. Since most Indian youth do not yet see global careers as an option, encouraging awareness and cultural familiarity are also essential. Companies in most countries also lack the practice of hiring from overseas. Partnership design, similar to products, often needs simplification and not compromise on quality, to suit different markets.
- A roadmap for operationalising agreements
  - Political will: Agreements fail without it.
  - Compliance: The Netherlands maritime contract, signed two years ago, is still stalled due to visa and qualification-matching requirements.
  - Partnerships and matchmaking: Chambers and governments have an important role to play.
  - Sourcing corridors: This needs sourcing capability, funding, skilling, and branding. German language learners in India have quadrupled in four years.
  - A forum for dialogue and dispute settlement: Disputes must be resolved quickly to protect the brand.
  - Language and culture training: It should be

enabled with Nordic support, since it cannot easily be done by India alone. Requirements vary by country and by job.
- Mobility is usually measured by visas, work permits, student numbers, and researcher exchanges. Behind each figure, however, is a personal decision to leave home, take a risk, and build new relationships. Mobility policy differs from trade policy because it involves deeply personal decisions concerning family, life, and work. Migration readiness (a passport and visa) is different from mobility readiness.

Session 6: Conversation on Geospatial Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

- Geospatial emerged to provide a unified view of several previously separate technology disciplines (surveying, mapping, remote sensing, geomatics, and geoinformatics) bringing them under one industry umbrella as they moved out of the laboratory.
- The world is undergoing rapid, tectonic geopolitical shifts, with no settled new world order yet in sight. Beneath this instability lie deeper structural challenges: climate resilience and sustainability, water security, food security, internal security. and energy and resource consumption.
- Technology stacks underpin the shift toward a Fifth Industrial Revolution, a world where machines and humans coexist. This stack rests on five foundational technologies: space infrastructure, geospatial infrastructure, AI infrastructure, digital twins (of living things), and autonomy.
- Sweden holds the world's oldest mapping agency, 498 years old (celebrating 500 years in two years); Survey of India (1767) is the second oldest, predating even the UK's Ordnance Survey; Norway's mapping agency dates to 1771; The United States dates to 1879.
- The global geospatial market is valued at approximately $772 billion. 60–65% of this market is driven by space infrastructure. Of the $772 billion, 55% comes from Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS/GPS) and location-based services. Earth observation accounts for roughly another 10%.

SOVEREIGN SPACE CAPABILITY

- There is a shift in debate from space availability to space security, protecting space assets that underpin everyday digital infrastructure.
- The likely model going forward blends self-reliance (sovereign satellites, sensors, and interpretation capability) with international cooperation since no single country can do everything on its own.
- The European Space Agency operates on an annual budget of roughly € 8–9 billion, with a consistent focus over the last 3–4 years on space autonomy. The EU Agency for Space Programme (EUSPA), based in Prague, supports the European Commission.
- Germany has announced a national investment of € 35 billion over 5 years in space infrastructure, comparable in scale to ESA's entire annual budget multiplied over the same period.

INCIDENTS FRAMING THE CASE FOR GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Winter 2021–2022 (Russia-Ukraine): Satellite imagery showed Russian troop build-up despite Moscow's denials; geospatial intelligence prepared observers ahead of the invasion. Companies like IceEye and Vantor continue to support day-to-day operational intelligence and to counter disinformation.
- The Baltic Sea: Undersea cables and pipelines have been targeted; NATO reportedly thwarted Russian submarine activity near the Svalbard archipelago. Because the polar night limits optical coverage, SAR was the technology that filled the gap.
- Operation Sindoor: India's response relied on commercial open-source satellite imagery already accessible to military analysts and "OSINT" worldwide; geospatial intelligence had, in effect, already proven the case before India needed to make it public.
- Tibet-Nepal border glacier collapse: The Himalayas, often called the "Third Pole" for their concentration of glaciers, are increasingly affected by climate change, mirroring impacts felt in the Arctic. Flooding and damage triggered ongoing rescue operations in Nepal, again layered with geospatial intelligence.
- Iran conflict: Targeting was reportedly guided by satellite imagery, until access to that commercial imagery was deliberately denied. This raised a pointed question about sovereignty: "space is for everybody," yet access can be selectively restricted.

GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRACTICE

- ICEEYE: A company that began by studying glaciers has transformed into a global provider of geospatial intelligence across domains.
- Located at 78°N, Norway's Svalbard station offers a distinct advantage, a single antenna can service a polar-orbiting satellite whereas most other locations require at least two ground stations to get the same coverage.
- SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) intelligence was central to the Indian Army's recent operations. India experiences cloud cover roughly 60% of the time which limits the use of optical sensors to daytime and clear weather. SAR overcomes this problem, enabling 24/7 monitoring. Recent tie-ups, including one with Agnikul (a rocket-launch start-up) and another with Dhruva (ground stations), cover the full space data cycle from launch to data capture, ground delivery, and AI-driven analysis.
- Pixxel, a hyperspectral imaging company, has already launched five satellites.
- GalaxEye pioneered OptoSAR, synthesising two sensor types on a single platform. Hexagon, a long-established, major geospatial player operating in India, has been described as the world's largest geospatial company.

NORWEGIAN PERSPECTIVE

- Norway is increasingly treating space as a critical strategic issue, with a new national space policy white paper due in 2026, expected to include a commercial dimension. Norway's geographic positioning gives it an outsized role in low-orbit satellite communication. With stations at Svalbard, Tromsø, Nordkapp, and Antarctica, over 80% of global low-orbit data flows through Norwegian systems. The first successful commercial launch took place the previous week at the new Andøya launch pad, positioned to serve satellite operators across Europe and beyond. Norwegian policy rests on multilateral collaboration, is closely tied to the European Space Agency and, as of this year, a new and already productive MoU has been signed with ISRO, including specific surveillance satellite development work.

ISR (INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, RECONNAISSANCE)

- India currently depends on global companies for geo-intelligence and ISR data.
- In the Ukraine war, despite having no satellites of its own, Ukraine had superior battlefield information because of access to commercial imagery providers.
- Similarly, during Operation Sindoor, American and Finnish companies supplied satellite and SAR data.
- The Indian government maintains an open stance on foreign investment and business entry, including FDI, but government-to-government (G2G) relationships remain a de facto precondition in defence-related space business, because trust is the single most important currency in space ISR. Bilateral agreements provide the framework needed to conduct this business.
- IceEye's own model, which is building or supporting satellite manufacturing, ground stations, and analysis capability that is then owned by the partner country, could work well for India. It is interesting to note that IceEye's first satellite was launched on an Indian PSLV rocket in 2018.

THE INDIAN-NORDIC PARTNERSHIP

- The relationship should not be viewed as transactional. It must be based on co-development, co-production, and technology-sharing, underpinned by trust and G2G relationships. Beyond government ties, Indian policy increasingly enables private-to-private tie-ups globally; for example, IceEye's partnerships with Agnikul and Dhruva Space, and Sweden's own space sector engagement with Indian partners.
- The Indian space start-up ecosystem is not only building hardware but also developing downstream AI-based products; for example, a change-detection heat map product combining EO and SAR imagery for climate monitoring.
- India and the Nordics each offer the other significant value, targeted cooperation on critical shared priorities is more realistic. Nordic Europe's security challenges differ meaningfully from other parts of Europe, suggesting scope for a regional space capability or infrastructure model.
- India, with years of industry experience behind this observation, offers scale and a deep talent pool as a complementary partner. The complementary strengths between them are significant. Nordic precision and high-tech analysis combined with Indian scale and skills present significant future opportunities. Nordic ground stations and launch infrastructure, combined with India's innovation capability, represent a natural area for convergence.

Session 7: India-Nordic Tech Ecosystems

Keynote Address by Saurabh Vijay, CEO, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and Head, India AI Mission

AADHAAR AS A PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR DPI

- Aadhaar has powered more than 850 billion authentications, underpinning roughly 50% of India's digital transactions.
- Aadhaar was designed for inclusivity from the outset (the first Aadhaar was issued to a tribal community in Nandurbar, Maharashtra) and has enabled economic participation and innovation at scale, including for women receiving their first form of identity.

- India intends to apply the same DPI principles, trust, scale, and structured rollout to its AI strategy, rather than an ad hoc approach.

WHY NORDIC PARTNERSHIP MATTERS FOR AI

- The Nordic region is often associated with quality, safety, and trustworthiness, qualities India wants to anchor its AI ecosystem around. While India started its AI journey somewhat later than some peers, there remains a clear direction of travel. Potential partnership areas include compute infrastructure, green data centres, and AI model development with an emphasis on data sovereignty and indigenisation.

SEVEN PILLARS OF INDIA'S AI STRATEGY

- Infrastructure, data centres, GPUs, compute
- Sovereign/indigenous AI models
- Talent development and democratisation of AI skills
- Linguistic and cultural diversity built into model design
- Use-case leadership, healthcare, agriculture, education, governance, climate, sustainability
- Digital governance and interoperability (including of digital identity systems)
- Safe and trusted AI, including rigorous red-teaming and testing before public rollout

START-UP ECOSYSTEM COLLABORATION

- India's existing collaboration with Station F in Paris, where selected Indian start-ups are trained and supported in fundraising, is a model that could be extended into Nordic ecosystems, noting that Indian start-ups have not yet matched the scale of Nordic fundraising and could benefit from further exposure and competitiveness building.

SOVEREIGN AI VS. OPEN ACCESS

- Outside sensitive/defence use cases, India wants uncontrolled, unrestricted access to models and unhindered data flows, citing past instances of access being abruptly denied as economically damaging.
- India is not pursuing isolation but wants Indian-trained, India-adapted models (citing Sarvam AI as an example) so that critical data remains within Indian control while still partnering internationally.

MULTILATERAL AI GOVERNANCE

- Presented here is an evaluation of the possibilities surrounding global collaboration for AI regulation and safety measures within an increasingly divided international environment.
- Academic and start-up collaboration models such as IIT Bombay's Section 8 company (Bhashini)
- India's participation in international initiatives from the India AI Summit, including the AI Trusted Commons initiative
- An acknowledgment that global benchmarking and safety standards remain an open area for further dialogue

PUBLIC SENTIMENT ON AI IN INDIA

- On India's historical, positive public attitude towards AI is shifting, given the controversy over a data centre in Maharashtra and concerns about AI's impact on back-office employment
- The Prime Minister announced a plan to train 10 million Indians in AI over the next year.
- State governments (e.g. Maharashtra) are issuing licenses encouraging officials to experiment with AI applications.
- 762 government problem statements have been shortlisted for AI-based solutions to be developed over the coming years.
- Early sector successes include agricultural advisory tools (e.g. "Mahavistaar", reportedly referenced by Bill Gates, being scaled to "Bharatvistaar"), dairy cooperative advisories (Amul), and cancer-related healthcare applications.
- There is no widespread fear of job losses, framing AI adoption in line with past technological transitions.

REGULATORY APPROACH AND AVOIDING WEST-LED STANDARDS

- India is working to establish a physical AI Safety Institute modelled on the UK's approach, potentially in partnership with the UK, with further announcements expected soon. There was a layer of acknowledgement that the space is still evolving and being actively debated at the policy level.

Panel Discussion

SIX PROPOSED DIRECTIONS FROM THE TECH AND TRUST WORKING GROUP REPORT 2025–2026

1. A Nordic-India technology investment mechanism. This would be a platform rather than a conventional pooled fund, connecting Nordic capital with Indian opportunities, improving visibility, and enabling co-investment.
2. A Nordic-India technology roundtable. Supported by a permanent working group under the dialogue, it would give the conversation continuity instead of restarting each year.
3. A joint cooperation framework. It would set out practical dos and don'ts on governance, intellectual property, commercialisation, decision-making, and dispute resolution so partners need not reinvent the rules every time.
4. A start-up and innovation corridor. It would offer start-up-friendly procurement, clearer regulatory guidance, a joint market-entry playbook, easier pilots, and pathways to scale across both regions.
5. Stronger talent and research links. These would cover students, researchers, engineers, and founders with joint academic and industrial research programmes in which multinationals would play a nodal role.
6. Shared open digital and AI infrastructure. A common foundation would let start-ups, researchers, and companies build and test services without duplicating core systems. Finland's LUMI supercomputer, now shared across the Nordics for sovereign AI, and Iceland's Icelandic-language AI work are existing examples.

- The working group's report found that trust was the common thread across all work streams. As the rules-based order weakens and systems grow more complex, organisations must be able to trust AI "black boxes", cloud infrastructure, and telecom networks to behave as expected.

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES: TELECOM AND INTEROPERABILITY

- From the telecom industry perspective, interoperability does not require identical regulation, only harmonised standards. Global connectivity works because the industry follows common standards such as 3GPP, the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (a global collaboration of telecommunications organisations that creates the technical specifications and guidelines for mobile phone and data networks). India's testing regime is robust, but that in-country testing requirements create friction even though they rest on harmonised standards. Harmonisation must cover the whole value chain, from development and manufacturing to deployment and maintenance. AI regulation should be light for now, letting the technology evolve.
- 5G accounts for only about 38% of Indian subscribers and operators have struggled to find use cases compelling enough to justify further investment. Physical AI, digital twins, and similar applications may change this. 6G will embed AI at the design stage, whereas in 5G it was an overlay on an architecture set a decade earlier.
- The technology is still at the standards-setting stage, led by 3GPP and the ITU, with TSDSI and the Bharat 6G Alliance in India. Cooperation is currently strongest at the EU-India level, and a Finland-India innovation fund has begun identifying joint 6G projects.

RESEARCH, TALENT AND THE AI HYPE CYCLE

- The current AI surge is a hype cycle, AI has upended data protection in research. The Danish approach treats AI as a helper while rethinking assessment. Learning requires friction, whereas AI offers convenience.

TRUST AS AN OPERATING PRINCIPLE

- A shared regime. Trust rests on standards, testing, certification, and predictable frameworks, not on equipment suppliers alone.
- Supply-chain transparency. India's trusted-source regime requires vendors to identify and declare product components. This reflects where the world is heading, given the geopolitical supply-chain risk.
- Security by design. Security must be built into products and tested throughout the development lifecycle, not added afterwards. India's CERT-In sets guidelines that companies are working to adopt.
- Personal relationships. In research, trust is built through peer review and starts small, with a project, then a Ph.D., then institutional ties.

SOVEREIGNTY, DATA, AND REGULATORY ALIGNMENT

- India will follow its own path and set its own rules, so partners should focus on shared values such as human-centric innovation rather than identical regulation. Sovereignty requirements should apply only where genuinely needed, and that over-restriction risks constraining innovation and deterring global hyperscaler investment. AI models benefit from knowledge drawn from around the world. Small countries such as Denmark are limited in sharing health data, which makes data discipline among partners essential.

STARTUPS, INVESTMENT, AND PUBLIC DIGITAL GOODS

- Large AI funding rounds in Silicon Valley should not deter others because the next layer of AI depends on context, knowledge, and ideas rather than on money alone. Sarvam AI's work on Indian languages was cited as an example. India is already supporting other countries with digital public infrastructure such as Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker, and also working with the World Bank Group. A suggestion that Nordic banks connect to UPI would enable direct rupee settlement without

routing through the US dollar system. A fund of funds for shared AI public goods is also under consideration.

FRAGMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL TECH STACK

- With regard to the US-China technology fragmentation, full decoupling from Western technology is unrealistic, but alternatives such as open source models offer openings for start-ups. In telecom, India is now the fifth country to build up that stack with Tejas. European vendors fill a gap left by the absence of a US platform and by trust concerns over Huawei and ZTE.
- On satellite connectivity, hybrid coexistence with terrestrial networks is expected over the next decade. Cheaper launches, including ISRO's, could dramatically change the economics of connectivity, and that ocean technologies are another emerging frontier.

WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO

- Mutual recognition of testing and certification. Products already certified in the EU or Nordics should not need to be retested from scratch in India.
- Recognition of intellectual property location for Make in India. Companies that manufacture in India but hold their IP abroad should not be excluded from public sector tenders.
- Equivalent data-protection regimes. Comparable standards under the EU's GDPR and India's DPDP Act would allow cross-border data flow that support innovation. ■

Agenda

September 10 & 11, 2026
The Claridges, New Delhi

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 10TH SEPT, 2026	
09:45–11:00	Working Group Meeting: The Sandbox Cohort on India-Nordic Cooperation on Green Hydrogen
11:00–11:30	Delegates Registration at the Viceroy, The Claridges, New Delhi
11:30–11:40	Opening Remarks by **INDRANI BAGCHI**, Chief Executive Officer, Ananta Centre
11:40–12:00	Keynote Address by **SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA**, Minister of State for External Affairs Moderated by **INDRANI BAGCHI**, CEO, Ananta Centre
12:00–13:15	**Session 1: The Future of the Global Order** *Session Overview*: As global power dynamics shift and crises strain existing institutions, the idea of a "Global Order" is increasingly contested. The conversation moves beyond abstract principles to examine how the rules-based order functions in practice across trade, technology, security, and questions if current frameworks are adaptable enough to accommodate rising powers, divergent political systems, and competing regional priorities. The session considers whether the future lies in preserving existing rules, reforming them, or accepting a more pluralistic order shaped by overlapping norms and coalitions. The key question is not only whether the Global order will endure, but whose rules will define it and how inclusive they will be. *Speakers:* **BANMALI AGRAWALA**, Chairman, Tata Advanced Systems **HENRIK CHETAN ASPENGREN**, Head of the Asia Programme, UI **INDRANI BAGCHI**, Chief Executive Officer , Ananta Centre **OLE JACOB SENDING**, Research Professor and Head of the Center for Geopolitics, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs Chair: **APARNA RAY**, Joint Secretary, Policy, Planning and Research Division, Ministry of External Affairs, India
13:15–14:30	Lunch at the Lutyens' Deli, The Claridges

14:45–16:00	**Session 2: From the Arctic to the Indo-Pacific** *Session Overview*: As geopolitical competition expands across regions, the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific are emerging as critical, yet often disconnected, strategic theatres. This session explores whether these geographies, examines how shifting power dynamics, evolving sea lanes, and environmental pressures are reshaping both regions. At its core, the discussion asks whether India and the Nordics can move beyond parallel priorities to develop a more; connected strategic vision or whether their engagements will remain regionally distinct in an increasingly interlinked world. *Speakers:* **DAGFINNUR SVEINBJÖRNSSON**, Arctic Circle Emissary on the Third Pole, Climate and the Oceans **VICE ADMIRAL SANJAY JASJIT SINGH**, Director General, United Services Institution of India **VIVEK SHARMA**, Director of Public Affairs, Maersk India Chair: **EMMA HAKALA**, Leading Researcher, Finnish Institute of International Affairs
16:00–16:30	Tea Break
16:30–17:15	**Session 3: India on the Nordic Menu** **VIR SANGHVI**, Chairman, Culinary Culture; Columnist & TV Presenter with **INDRANI BAGCHI**, Chief Executive Officer, Ananta Centre
18:00	Departure for Reception
18:30–21:30	Reception & Dinner hosted by **H.E. PETRA MENANDER**, Ambassador of Sweden to India at the Embassy of Sweden, New Delhi
DAY 2: FRIDAY, 11TH SEPT, 2026	
9:00	All delegates are requested to assemble at the Viceroy, Claridges
10:00–11:15	**Session 4: Market Access, Two Models: What EFTA and EU Agreements Unlock** *Session Overview*: As India deepens its economic engagement with Europe, two distinct pathways are emerging: the more agile, investment-driven approach of EFTA, and the larger, more regulatory and comprehensive framework of the EU. Together, they offer complementary, but fundamentally different, models of market access. This session explores how EFTA may offer faster entry and targeted opportunities, while an EU agreement promises scale, standards alignment, and long-term integration into the European single market. At its core, the session asks: do these agreements create parallel tracks, or a layered strategy for India's economic integration with Europe? *Speakers:* **AGNÈS COURADES ALLEBECK**, Director EU Trade Policy, National Board of Trade, Sweden **AJAY SRIVASTAVA**, Founder, Global Trade Research Initiative **POOJA KAPUR**, Additional Secretary, Northern Europe, Ministry of External Affairs, India **RAVICHANDRAN PURUSHOTHAMAN**, President, Danfoss India Region Chair: **UMMU SALMA BAVA**, Chairperson and Jean Monnet Chair, Centre for European Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University
11:15–11:30	Tea Break

11:30–12:45	**Session 5: India-Nordics Mobility Pathways** *Session Overview*: This session explores how both sides can build more structured, mutually beneficial mobility pathways spanning high-skilled talent, students, researchers, and emerging sectors such as tech, healthcare, and green industries. It will also examine barriers to mobility, including visa regimes, recognition of qualifications, and integration challenges. At its core, the discussion asks how mobility can move beyond short-term gaps to become a long-term partnership, one that supports economic growth, innovation, and deeper people-to-people ties. *Subcontext*: India has signed Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements with Denmark (2024, JWG met 2025) and Finland (March 2026), focusing on talent exchange, student internships, and short-term work. Sweden benefits indirectly via the India-EU FTA's Mode 4 provisions (signed Jan 2026), easing intra-corporate transfers and access for Indian IT pros in 37 sub-sectors. Norway and Iceland lag with ongoing talks but leverage EFTA trade commitments for services mobility *Speakers:* **ANIL TALWANI**, Director, Projects, Echo Engineering, Kaiku HR **ARNAB BHATTACHARYA**, Chief Executive Officer, GATI Foundation **RAVINDER KAUR**, Professor of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen Chair: **SARA LARSSON**, Head of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India
13:00–14:00	Lunch at the Lutyens' Deli, The Claridges
14:15–15:00	**Session 6: Conversation on Geospatial Intelligence** *Session Overview*: As data becomes central to governance, business, and security, geospatial intelligence is emerging as critical infrastructure, shaping how countries plan, respond, and compete. From climate monitoring and urban planning to logistics and disaster management, location-based data is transforming decision-making across sectors. This session explores how India and the Nordics can leverage their complementary strengths, India's scale and digital infrastructure, and Nordic expertise in precision technologies, sustainability, and data systems. It will examine the growing role of satellite data, AI, and real-time analytics in building smarter, more resilient economies. At its core, the discussion asks how geospatial intelligence can move from niche capability to mainstream tool and how partnerships can unlock its full economic, environmental, and strategic potential. *Speakers:* **LT GEN. ANIL KUMAR BHATT**, Director General, Indian Space Association **LT COL VARUN PATHAK**, Head of Deployment Strategy, Galaxeye Space Chair: **SANJAY KUMAR**, Chief Executive Officer, Geospatial Intelligence

15:00–16:30	**Session 7: India-Nordic Tech Ecosystems** Keynote Address: **SAURABH VIJAY**, CEO, UIDAI and CEO, IndiaAI Mission (15:00–15:15), followed by a 10 minute report back on the Tech and Trust Working Group by the Chair. *Session Overview*: As technology reshapes economies and societies, it is no longer just a driver of innovation, it is a source of power. From digital public infrastructure and AI to data governance and platform economies, the systems being built today are quietly defining how people live, work, and interact. This session explores how India and the Nordics approach this transformation from different but complementary perspectives: India through scale and rapid deployment, and the Nordics through trust, design, and regulatory frameworks. It examines the growing intersection of technology with policy where code influences behaviour, platforms shape markets, and governance increasingly happens through systems rather than institutions. At its core, the discussion asks how to build technology that is not only innovative, but also accountable, inclusive, and resilient and who ultimately gets to shape the rules of the digital world. *Speakers:* **CARSTEN ORTH GAARN-LARSEN**, Senior Vice President for National and International Partnerships at the Technical University of Denmark **RAJAN NAVANI**, Chairman & Managing Director, Jetline Group, Jet Synthesys **VIBHA MEHRA**, Country Manager, Nokia India **VIJETA ARYA**, Vice President & Head Public Policy & Government Affairs, Ericsson India Chair: **BALA KAMALLAKHARAN**, Founder, Startup Iceland
16:30–17:00	Closing Remarks

Special Invitee



Shri Pabitra Margherita was born on October 13th, 1974 at Margherita (State of Assam) in the North Eastern Region of India. He completed his early schooling from his home town. He went on to complete his higher studies in Textile Technology from Assam Textile Institute, Guwahati (Assam). He started his political career in 2014 and has since held numerous public positions, including as Member Secretary (Assam Advisory Committee for Students and Youth Welfare) and Political Secretary to the Chief Minister of Assam. A Member of the Parliament of India (Rajya Sabha / Upper House) since April 2022, Shri Pabitra Margherita was sworn in as an Indian Union Minister of State on June 9th, 2024. He assumed charge as Indian Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Indian Union Minister of State for Textiles on June 11th 2024. Shri Pabitra Margherita has immensely contributed to the growth and development of Assamese art and culture as the Chairperson of Jyoti Chitraban Film Studio (Government of Assam) from 2017–2021 and as Chief Editor of Assamese language monthly news magazines “Maya” and “Sa Re Ga Ma” from 1998-2005. He has produced more than 20 short films and documentaries in Assamese language, apart from production of more than 100 Assamese language songs in folk and contemporary genre.

Participants



Abhishek Agrawal is Director of Business Development at ICEYE, a world-leading Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite company headquartered in Espoo, Finland. He leads growth across defense, intelligence, and national security, working with governments and multinational partners to deliver space-based intelligence that supports critical decision-making and operational advantage. Since joining ICEYE in 2018, Abhishek has built a distinctive career that bridges hands-on engineering and strategic commercial leadership. He has contributed across engineering, systems development, product strategy, and global partnerships, playing a key role in ICEYE's evolution from an emerging SAR innovator into a strategic space-infrastructure provider operating the world's most capable SAR constellation. In his current role, Abhishek defines and executes go-to-market strategies for sovereign space programs, defense modernization initiatives, and intelligence partnerships. He works closely with senior government officials, defense and intelligence stakeholders, and industry leaders to articulate how EO/ISR capabilities enhance resilience, readiness, and long-term strategic foresight. Abhishek began his career at ICEYE as a Spacecraft Assembly, Integration, and Testing (AIT) Engineer and later specialized in Attitude Determination and Control Systems (ADCS), contributing to the end-to-end development and launch of ICEYE's first ADCS prototype. He has also led multiple launch and early-orbit operations (LEOP), bringing deep operational insight to his strategic work.



Agnès Courades Allebeck currently serves as Head of the Department for EU Trade Policy, where she is responsible for advising the Swedish Government on EU free trade agreements, including the EU–India Free Trade Agreement. She has also served as a member of the Advisory Council of Swedish Customs and, early in her career, held advisory positions at the National Board of Trade Sweden. In the 1990s, she worked as a research assistant at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). She holds a master's degree in Political Science and Government from the Institut d'Études Politiques d'Aix-en-Provence, a Diploma of Advanced Studies in International Economic Relations from Aix-Marseille Université, and a Diploma of Advanced Studies in European Integration from the College of Europe in Bruges. Her areas of interest and expertise include EU law, trade policy, and trade-related development assistance.



Agnes Julin is a Swedish diplomat with extensive international experience from postings in New York, Jerusalem, and Riyadh. Currently serving as Deputy Head of Mission and Head of the Political Section at the Embassy of Sweden in New Delhi, previously she held positions in both multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, with a particular focus on political affairs, the strategic promotion of Sweden's interests abroad, and promoting exchange and collaboration across regions. She brings a personal connection to India through family history, as her grandparents lived in the country during the 1960s.



Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne is a distinguished military leader who served as Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) [2011–13]. Commissioned into the fighter steam of the IAF on 24 June 1972, his service record includes leading the Western Air Command (2009–11) the IAF's largest operational command; directing staff (DS) at Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE) & Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) and commanding a fighter squadron and a premium IAF airbase. An alumnus of the Air Command and Staff College (USA), he also trained with the Royal Air Force in the UK on Jaguar aircraft. Throughout his career of 42 years, Air Chief Browne held pivotal strategic roles. As the first Defence Attaché in Tel Aviv he was mandated with the establishment of the Defence Wing (1997–2000) and, as Deputy Chief, Vice Chief and the Chief of the Air Staff, he oversaw the IAF's extensive modernisation drive. Following his service tenure, the former Air Chief was appointed India's Ambassador to Norway (2014–2016). He currently serves as a Director on the board of Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL).



Ajay Srivastava is the Founder of GTRI. He took VRS from the Government of India in March 2022. He is an Indian Trade Service officer with experience in trade policy making, WTO and FTA negotiations. He is an MBA from Indian School of Business.



Anil Talwani is part of the Leadership team of Kaiku HR Oy, a Finnish group ofcompanies having ECHO Engineering Oy, FinECHO Engineering, ECHO Works and FillFinn to name a few.Anil Talwani has been living and working in Finland for over 20+ years and has had theopportunity of setting up and establishing companies & business in Finland. He hasplayed an important role in setting up teams offering Engineering services to Finnishcompanies. Hundreds of engineers have worked on these projects over the years.In addition to Engineering services from ECHO Engineering, Kaiku HR Oy group issupporting Finnish companies with their work-based immigration programme in themost ethical manner.



Anne Sofie Schøtt is an Assistant Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College. Her research interest is on India as an emerging power and how the country positions itself as a strategic partner for western states. Within this field, she focuses on the opportunities for Denmark as a small state to engage in the Indo-Pacific. For twenty years, Anne Sofie Schøtt has been teaching cultural awareness, conflict theory and strategy for cadets and officers primarily at the Danish Air Force. She holds a PhD in Middle East Studies and her previous research centered on the strategic consequences of Danish military interventions in the Middle East. She is the author of the book Kurdish Diaspora Mobilisation in Denmark. Supporting the Struggle in Syria published at Edinburgh University Press (2021).



Annette Holte is the President of Kongsberg Maritime India, where she leads the company's operations and strategic growth in one of its key international markets. With deep experience in international business and a strong focus on cross-cultural leadership, Annette plays a vital role in strengthening Kongsberg Maritime's position in India's evolving maritime and defense sectors. Under her leadership, the company is expanding its local supply chain, supporting "Make in India" initiatives, and serving as a trusted partner to the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Annette is also a passionate advocate for inclusive workplaces and leadership development, particularly in fostering opportunities for women in engineering and maritime industries. She actively represents Kongsberg Maritime in business forums and diplomatic engagements, promoting stronger ties between Norway and India in innovation, education, and technology. Kongsberg Maritime has been operating in India since 1955 and established its own legal entity in 2006. The India operation now comprises 170 employees and is growing steadily. Recent significant contracts include a major win with Hindustan Shipyard for the RAS system on five Fleet Support Ships (FSS) for the Indian Navy. Other important projects include two autonomous barges for Asko Maritime, built at Cochin Shipyard, and two Commissioning, Service and Operation Vessels (CSOVs) for Pelagic Offshore, supporting the offshore wind market.



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



Aparna Ray (IFS: 2008) is the Joint Secretary for the Centre for Contemporary China Studies (CCCS); and, the Policy Planning & Research (PP&R) Divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs. Previously, she served as the Counsellor to the Permanent Mission of India to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva; and, has also held positions at High Commission of India in Islamabad and Embassy of India, Beijing. She has a B.A. LLB from the National Law School of India University, Bangalore; and, MPP from the School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. She speaks English, Hindi, Bengali and Chinese.



Arnab Bhattacharya is a seasoned operator with 25+ years of experience building, scaling, and turning around businesses across India and Asia. He has been a founding member of Niyogin, India's first listed fintech NBFC and Claryty, a platform that partners with MSMES to help them achieve their business growth potential. Currently, he is a Board Member at Printo, Advisor to Kshamata and is an ICF-certified leadership coach with a focus on business coaching to help founders and promoters execute with clarity. Over his career, Arnab has built and led more than 10 independent businesses across fintech, retail, B2B commerce, real estate and institutional banking. Prior to his entrepreneurial journey, he held senior roles at Citi, HSBC, and ANZ where he ran commercial banking for Greater China and managed a $4Bn balance sheet. He has been involved in the development sector for the past 7 years as a partner with Social Venture Partners with a strong focus on livelihood generation. As an SVP partner, he has worked directly with non-profits, a Fast Pitch coach, grants committee member, and has been a keen advocate of designing and implementing systemic solutions. Arnab is based in Bangalore along with his wife Manije and their 2 sons Aedan and Ahran. He enjoys reading books and cooking in his spare time while being a keen supporter of Arsenal football club.



Arvinn Gadgil is currently Deputy Ambassador and Minister Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi. He has had a diverse career in international diplomacy, foreign affairs, humanitarian response and international development. From 2008 – 2013, Gadgil served in different ministerial roles including as State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Minister for International Development in the Norwegian government. Earlier in his career, he worked in international development civil society organisations. Trained as a career diplomat, he was posted to Afghanistan in 2007–2008. After serving in the Government, he joined as Senior Director for Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) - one of the largest humanitarian organisations in the world operating in more than 50 countries. After four years at NRC, he returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assume the role of Policy Director for International Development Policy. Immediately prior to arriving in Delhi and since 2021, he served as Director of the United Nations Global Policy Centre for Governance developing advice on governance issues for the UN global leadership and for more than 140 member countries. Concurrently, he also served as the UN's Senior Representative to Norway at the Ambassadorial level. Gadgil has held numerous board-level appointments across academia, international organisations, financial institutions, and civil society. His decision to represent Norway in India carries a personal dimension as well: of Indian origin, with paternal roots in Maharashtra, and having gone to high school in Pune, Gadgil has maintained enduring ties to India throughout his life. He sees this posting as an opportunity to combine his professional expertise with his personal heritage in strengthening the bilateral relationship between Norway and India.



Auður Birna Stefánsdóttir is Program Manager at the Institute of International Affairs and Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre. She holds a B.A. degree in Anthropology and an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Iceland. At the Institute of International Affairs Auður has for example coordinated; a research project on refugees integration opportunities and challenges in Iceland, three edX courses; on intercultural competency in education, on peace and conflict processes, and on small states and leadership as well as being responsible for the annual conference of The Institute of International Affairs. She is also Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre's project manager of the Arms Control Negotiation Academy (ACONA) and Höfði's Annual Peace Conference, the Imagine Forum.



Bala Kamallakharan is an entrepreneur, investor, and ecosystem builder based in Reykjavík, Iceland. He is the founder of Startup Iceland and a General Partner at Founders Ventures, where he invests in and supports early-stage technology companies. Originally from Chennai, India, Bala has

spent more than two decades working across technology, finance, entrepreneurship, and venture capital. He is also Chairman of the Iceland Cricket Association and is actively involved in strengthening ties between Iceland, India, and the wider Nordic region. In 2025, Bala was awarded the Order of the Falcon for his contribution to Iceland's startup and innovation ecosystem.



Banmali Agrawala joined Tata Sons Private Limited as the President, Infrastructure, Defence & Aerospace in October 2017, in his second tenure with the Indian conglomerate. In his earlier role, at GE, he was President and CEO - South Asia, where he was responsible for the American multinational corporation's operations in the South Asia region. Prior to GE, he was Executive Director (Business Development & Strategy) and a member of the Board of Tata Power. A veteran in the Energy domain, Banmali has over 30 years of global experience. He started his career with the Wartsila Group, a Finnish manufacturing and services company, where he spent over 20 years, both in India and in Finland. At the time of leaving the Wartsila Group, he was the Managing Director of Wartsila India Ltd, the Global head of the Bio Power Industries and a member of the Global Power Plant Management Board. In the Tata Group, Banmali is the Chairman of companies like Tata Projects, Tata Housing Development Company, Tata Realty and Infrastructure Ltd., Air Asia (India) Ltd. and is on the Board of Tata Power and Tata Advanced Systems Limited, Tata Electronics Private Limited and Tata Medical and Diagnostics Limited. He also heads Global Corporate Affairs at Tata Sons including its international offices in ASEAN, MENA, North America, China and the Public Affairs Office, Delhi. An active member of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Banmali has held several official positions within CII such as Chairman of the Western Regional Council, and currently is also a Member of CII's National Council. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the US - India Business Council (USIBC) and Pratham Education Foundation. Banmali is a Mechanical Engineering graduate from Mangalore University and an alumnus of the Advanced Management Programme of Harvard Business School.



Bart Gaens works as Senior Research Fellow at the Global Security and Governance Research Program at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) in Helsinki, Finland. He is also Japan Chair at the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) in Tallinn, Estonia, and holds the title of Docent at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki. In the past he has worked as Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Helsinki, and as Specially-Appointed Associate Professor at Osaka University, Japan. His research has focused on EU-Asia relations, Japan's foreign and security policy, India's foreign policy and relations with the EU, and connectivity in the Indo-Pacific.



Basab Banerjee brings four decades of international experience in the design and management of vocational training systems, across countries spanning Canada, Japan and Australia. Following an extensive tenure in the Indian Army and senior roles at organizations including Reliance Retail and Bharti Airtel, he supported the Government of India's national skill development effort at the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), the Government's apex skilling agency—from designing competency frameworks to leading engagement with industry. Between 2010 and 2014 he led the Government of India's talent cooperation initiatives with the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, the European Union and New Zealand. From 2015 to 2018 he served as Advisor – Skills at the Asian Development Bank, playing an enabling role in the establishment of State Skill Missions in Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya and Odisha. At Magic Billion, Basab is responsible for sourcing, mobilizing and deploying high-quality Indian talent. Drawing on an extensive professional network, he has built a substantial database of highly qualified candidates open to overseas assignments, and collaborated on establishing India's finest world-class testing and training center in Kolkata. His current appointments include Founding Member, GATI Foundation, Advisor for International Mobility, West Bengal State Skill Mission, and Board Member, B-Able Foundation.

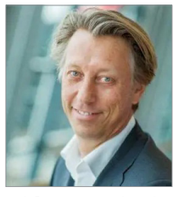


Benedikt Höskuldsson has served as the Ambassador of Iceland to India since September 2024. Previously, he was Special Envoy for Climate at Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Iceland's Permanent Representative to IRENA. With more than three decades of experience in diplomacy, sustainable energy, climate policy, and international development, he has held senior leadership positions at Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) and the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Throughout his career, he has played a key role in advancing global renewable energy initiatives, including the establishment of the Global Geothermal Alliance. He has also

served as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Iceland in Tokyo and as a member of the Board of the Nordic Development Fund. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Lewis & Clark College and a Master of Arts in Economics, specializing in Money and Monetary Systems and International Economics, from Portland State University, where he also studied International Business.



Bhairavi Jani is a successful logistics and supply chain entrepreneur, a social development enthusiast, a notable author, a nature conservationist and a committed philanthropist. Bhairavi is the Chairperson and Founder of IEF Entrepreneurship Foundation and Executive Director of SCA Group of Companies founded in 1896. SCA Group undertakes activities in supply chain and logistics sector. She is also a Director at Cargo Service Center India and Chairperson of Himalayan Essence. Bhairavi has been listed as one of the 25 most Powerful Women in India by the India Today publication. She has been profiled as Stree Shakti (Woman Power) person by CNBC Awaaz and featured as a Young Turk by CNBC TV 18. She has been listed as one of the 10 women exemplars by the Hindustan Times and Business Today Magazine has featured her as the Supply Chain Maven. Bhairavi was selected as the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leader (YGL) in 2018. She is a KBF Fellow of the Aspen Global Leadership Network of the Aspen Institute. In 2014 Bhairavi undertook a project, "Highway to Swades", for which she drove 18,181 km across India to gather information on peoples' choices and views of entrepreneurship, livelihood and development. She has eloquently captured her travels and her observations in her maiden book – "Highway to Swades – Rediscovering India's Superpowers" published by HarperCollins.



Bjørn Iversen is the Director of Innovation Norway in India and Commercial Counsellor at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi. Bjørn has extensive leadership experience with a primary focus on ICT and digitalization. He has a wide expertise in international sales and relationship building, gained through work from Norway as well as professional assignments across East Asia and the Middle East. Bjørn also has a background in auditing and has completed finance studies at BI Norwegian Business School and INSEAD.



Carsten Orth Gaarn-Larsen is a member of the Executive Board and Senior Vice President with responsibility of national and international partnerships at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). He is also responsible for DTU's presence throughout Denmark, Arctic DTU, Quantum DTU, Maritime DTU, Lifelong Learning, and Alumni DTU. Earlier in his career, Carsten was the CEO of CLEAN, Denmark's Green Cluster which focuses on energy and environmental technologies. For nine years, Carsten was the CEO of the Danish National Advanced Technology Foundation, and he worked fourteen years in the Danish telecommunications incumbent, TDC, and served as president of the Danish Academy of Technical Sciences (ATV) from 2014–2017. Carsten Orth Gaarn-Larsen holds an MSc in Engineering (DTU), a Diploma in Foreign Trade and MSc in Economics from Copenhagen Business School. Additionally, Carsten has leadership and management education from INSEAD, Wharton, MIT and Harvard Business School and has been active on several boards.



Christian Heikkinen is a career diplomat specializing currently in trade and economic affairs. Christian currently works as the Team Lead for Economic Relations at the Finnish Embassy to the United States. At the Embassy, Christian is responsible for promoting trade and research collaboration between Finland and the United States and he guides his Team Members in emerging technologies, connectivity, logistics, space, defense, health, energy and climate. Christian coordinates the Team Finland USA network. Christian reports on the U.S. economy and works with the U.S. authorities on export control. Prior to joining the Sustainable Growth and Commerce team, Christian worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki mostly with Eastern, Central and Southern European Countries. In addition, he has worked with South Caucasus and Afghanistan. He has been posted to Finnish Embassies in Moscow, Berlin, Kyiv and Vilnius. Christian holds a Master's degree in organizational communication and he is fluent in Finnish, English, German and Swedish. He has a working-level knowledge of Russian and French.



Dagfinnur Sveinbjörnsson is the Founder and Chairman of the Climate Research Foundation, a not for profit foundation established for the purpose of initiating and sustaining scientific research on the nature and consequences of climate change in the Himalaya-Third Pole and the Arctic. Worked with the founders of the Third Pole Environment Program in the early stages and with various institutions across the region; in particular in India, China, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. He served as the CEO of the Arctic Circle from 2014 to 2021 and was the Arctic Circle Emissary for the Third Pole, Climate, and Oceans from 2021 to 2023. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Arctic.



Emma Hakala is a Leading Researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Her research focuses on environmental security and the geopolitics of climate change, such as the role of international actors in building climate security practices. Her current research projects focus on the impacts of climate change on Finland's comprehensive security and the implications of global water risks to security.



Freddy Svane is a senior Danish diplomat and international strategist with over 40 years of experience spanning diplomacy, business, and geopolitics. He previously served as Danish Ambassador to India and Japan, in each case on two separate occasions. Over his career, Svane has held senior roles within the Danish Foreign Service, alongside experience as a private-sector executive and adviser. He has also worked as a geopolitical adviser and Track 2 diplomat, drawing on decades of firsthand engagement in international affairs.His areas of expertise span geopolitics, India, Japan, the Indo-Pacific, Europe, China, the Arctic and Greenland, defence, technology and AI, energy, critical minerals, and international business. He focuses on advising governments, companies, and international organisations on geopolitical risk, strategic positioning, international partnerships, and the evolving global order. Svane brings together diplomatic experience, business insight, and geopolitical analysis to help translate international developments into practical strategic choices, with a particular focus on Denmark, Europe, India, Japan, and the Indo-Pacific region.



Harshit Kacholiya is a New Delhi-based technology policy strategist and international governance advisor with five years of specialized experience shaping global digital infrastructure. He currently leads AI Policy and Digital Public Infrastructure at the iSPIRT Foundation, where he directs India's effort to take its open digital public infrastructure abroad. Operating at the intersection of public policy and technology, Harshit focuses on the architecture and international scaling of India Stack frameworks and cross-border data-sharing mechanisms. His current work centers on the Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA), positioning it as India's next DPI for AI. He actively carries bilateral tracks into France, Japan, and Brazil to foster digital sovereignty agreements. Additionally, Harshit heads a MeitY-backed initiative establishing a global digital identity standards body.



Henrik Chetan Aspengren is Head of the Asia Programme, Senior Analyst and Lead for the "Project for Nordic-India Relations" (PNIR). PNIR is UI's main platform for research, analysis and expertise on India, and India's role in world affairs. As a trained historian, Aspengren brings his academic research interest in the history of modern India to his analytical work on contemporary India and its growing global footprint. Aspengren is the author of books, journal articles, and reports on India, South Asia, and the Indo-Pacific Region.



Indrani Bagchi is the Chief Executive Officer of the Ananta Centre, India. A distinguished journalist and foreign policy analyst, she was Associate Editor at The Times of India, where she reported on and analyzed global and Indian foreign policy issues from 2004 to 2022. As Diplomatic Editor, she closely covered the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), providing in-depth reporting and analysis on India's diplomatic engagements and international relations. Her work has been widely recognized for interpreting global geopolitical trends through an Indian perspective. Prior to joining The Times of India, Ms. Bagchi worked with leading publications including India Today, The Economic Times, and The Statesman. She graduated with Honours in English from Loreto College, University of Calcutta. In 1997, she was selected as a Reuters Fellow at the University of Oxford. In 2010, she received the prestigious Chang Lin-Tien Fellowship from The

Asia Foundation to study U.S.–China relations at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Ms. Bagchi is also a Fellow of the Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship (Class III) at the Ananta Aspen Centre and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network (AGLN).



Karolina Gasinska Singh is heading the Global Security Policy department at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI). She oversees projects focusing on security policy issues and strategic trends in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Since 2020, she has held different leadership roles at FOI. For nearly a decade, Karolina worked as an Africa analyst and has field experience from Mali and Kenya. Karolina holds a Master's degree in Politics and International Studies from Uppsala University, Sweden.



Lars Gjesvik is a senior researcher in the Research Group for Security and Defence at NUPI, where he also serves as the co-leader of the research center for digitization and cyber security. His research focuses on the intersection of private enterprise and state interests, security challenges, and power politics related to digitalization and emerging technologies.



Lt Col Varun Pathak (Retd) is a former Special Forces officer with over 22 years of service in the Indian Army, specialising in special operations and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT). His operational career centred on India's most sensitive theatres — Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh — leading high-risk missions in counter-terrorist operations, long-range reconnaissance along the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control, and hostage-rescue interventions. He later served as a domain expert at the Defence Image Processing and Analysis Centre (DIPAC), India's premier tri-service unit for satellite imagery exploitation and GEOINT analysis, bridging operational intelligence requirements with national-level imagery tradecraft. At GalaxEye Space, he now applies this two-decade foundation in field operations and intelligence tradecraft to shape defence-oriented geospatial solutions, keeping product strategy grounded in operational reality.



Lt Gen AK Bhatt (Retd) is currently the Director General of the Indian Space Association (ISpA), an apex industry body created to be the collective voice of the Indian Space industry. He is the first Director General of the Indian Space Association (ISpA). General Bhatt has held apex leadership and management positions in the Indian Army at the Army Headquarters in the Indian Defence Services for over 39 years. He has been Director General Military Operations of the Indian Army, wherein he was responsible for operations of the entire Indian Army. He was DGMO during the critical period of the Doklam faceoff with China in 2017. He also was the 'Military Secretary', responsible for HR management in the Indian Army, he has been Principal Staff Officer (PSO) at Army Headquarter twice. General Bhatt has held critical operational appointments of the Corps Commander of Prestigious Chinar Corps in Srinagar in 2018 and General Office Commanding Division in Assam. Both assignments involved intimate interactions with multiple agencies including Central and State Governments, members of civil society, and academia. His ability to synergize and implement challenging decisions, taking all stakeholders together has been his forte. General Bhatt has an eye for astute quality, an unerring ability to ensure everyone under his charge complies to laws, rules and regulations, and has built many a top-quality team of professionals that demonstrate this. Amongst his many military assignments is his command of a multinational unit in a UN Mission in the Lebanon - Israel border and tenure as instructor in Commando Wing. During a career spanning four decades, General Bhatt has been the recipient of several awards from the Government of India. These include the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (2021), Uttam Yudh Seva Medal (2019), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2015), Sena Medal (2014), Vishisht Seva Medal (2012), Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card (2008). General Bhatt is a graduate of the Army Staff College, Camberley in the UK. He has a Masters in Management Studies from Osmania University and an M. Phil in Defence & Strategic Studies from the prestigious Madras University in Chennai. He has done his early schooling from Hampton Court School and St George's College in Mussoorie. He has been appointed as the Chairman of Board of Governors of IIIT Kota and IIIT Ranchi by the President of India. As the founding Director General of the Indian Space Association (ISpA), he has been working relentlessly to create and energize the private space ecosystem in India and has been at the forefront as a single voice of the entire Indian Space Sector.



Maitrayee Jha is a Programme Executive at Ananta Centre where she works on Track 1.5 and Track 2 Dialogues between India and Europe. She holds a Master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building from Jamia Millia Islamia, a postgraduate degree in Conflict Transformation from Lady Shri Ram College, and a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Miranda House. Her thesis focused on Myanmar's civil war (Chin State and India's Northeast). She has also published book reviews and articles in defence journals, including IDSA and USI.



Maria Elizabeth Joseph leads the West Asia and Europe portfolio at Ananta Aspen Centre. She holds a Master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Tel Aviv University and was a recipient of the Middle East Studies Thesis Grant for her comparative historical work on Iran's policy towards the Baluch and Kurds. She writes on the Middle East and has contributed a chapter on "The Arab Spring and Sunni Extremism among Sunni Minorities in Iran," edited by MD. Muddassir Quamar in Politics of Change in Middle East and North Africa Since Arab Spring, published by Routledge in 2023. She most recently contributed a chapter to "Global Bridges: The EU and the Global South for an inclusive multilateralism" published the Global Policy Centre at IE University in Spain (November 2024) and "ITEC at 60: India's Development Partnership over Six Decades" published by Ananta Centre and the Gates Foundation (March 2025). She has a working knowledge of Arabic and is currently studying Persian and Urdu.



Martin Egknud Petersen is the Deputy Chief of Mission and Minister Counsellor, Political Affairs at the Embassy of Denmark in New Delhi. Prior to his posting in India, he served as Team Leader for Levant and Gulf Affairs in the Middle East and North Africa Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, and as Senior Political Advisor at the Embassy of Denmark in Washington, DC. Before joining the Danish foreign service, he worked for the International Crisis Group in Brussels. He holds an MA in Philosophy and Social Science from the University of Aarhus, Denmark.



May-Elin Stener is currently Ambassador of Norway to India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives. Prior to taking up this position, from 2020–2023, she was the Deputy Director General of the Regional department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, covering Africa, Asia, Latin -America and the Middle East, as well as peace and reconciliation issues. May-Elin headed the section for Horn of Africa and West-Africa between 2018–2020. She was Norway's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations headquarter in New York (2014–2018) as well as Deputy Head of the Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa (2007–2011). She has worked for the Norwegian Foreign Service since 1995, and has extensive diplomatic experience multilaterally, with a focus on humanitarian affairs. She has also been posted to the UN offices in Geneva and has headed the Section for Humanitarian Affairs in the Ministry.



Mikko Kivikoski is Ambassador (Designate) to the Embassy of Finland in New Delhi, India. Born in Salo, Finland, on 24 March 1970, he holds a Licentiate in Political Science (2000) and a Master's degree in Political Science (1997), both from the University of Turku. His professional career has been built entirely within the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He most recently served as Deputy Director General for the Department for Asia and Oceania from 2024 to 2026, having previously held the equivalent position in the Department for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia from 2021 to 2024. Between 2017 and 2020, he served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Finland to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Earlier in his career, he held a series of postings both abroad and in Helsinki. He served as Acting Consul General and later Deputy Consul General at the Consulate General of Finland in St. Petersburg, and as Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN in New York. In Helsinki, he worked as Deputy Director of the Unit for Russia at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and abroad again as First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE in Vienna. His earlier assignments included Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland in Riga and Second Secretary at the Embassy of Finland in Moscow, marking the start of his long career in the Finnish Foreign Service.



Monika Sharma is the head of the India Office of the Novo Nordisk Foundation where she is responsible for the facilitation of the development of strategic projects in India. Monika Sharma has previously had a career in research where she worked on Multidrug Resistance in pathogenic fungus. Prior to joining the foundation, Monika has worked with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Government of India where she has negotiated and catalysed the delivery of many bilateral programmes and research funds in the domain of Food, Water, Energy and Health. She holds a PhD degree from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.



Ole Jacob Sending is Research Professor in the Research group for global order and diplomacy at NUPI. Sending does research on global governance, with a particular focus on the role of international and non-governmental organizations in peacebuilding, humanitarian relief, and development. His publications have appeared, inter alia, in International Studies Quarterly, European Journal of International Relations, and International Theory. Sending has also been Research Director at NUPI. He holds a PhD from the University of Bergen.



Petra Hansson has served since 2024 as deputy director in the section for South Asia at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. A career diplomat, her previous postings and functions include Washington, DC (2019–2024), and Paris, France (2014–2019), the EU coordination and policy office of the Swedish Prime minister's office (2010–2014), brief postings to Geneva and London, and three years at the Embassy of Sweden in Bogotá, Colombia. She earned her Master's degree in political science at Uppsala university, Sweden, and the Institut d'études politiques in France.



Petra Menander has served as Ambassador of Sweden to Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen since September 2022, leading a team of around 20 at the Embassy in Riyadh. Before this, she headed the Unit for Project Exports and International Procurement at Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2018–2022), driving Swedish exports in large infrastructure and international procurement. From 2013 to 2018, she was Chief Business Development Officer at Skåne Care AB, exporting the Swedish healthcare model through consultancy and training, with agreements spanning Saudi Arabia, Iceland, and the UAE. Between 2011 and 2013, she combined a role as Strategic Advisor on World Bank support to fragile states with PhD studies at Lund University on public finance in Egypt, and headed the Secretariat coordinating international financial institutions' response to the Arab Spring at the African Development Bank in Tunis, where she also advised the bank's COO. From 2000 to 2011, she held senior roles within the Swedish Foreign Service, including Deputy Head of the Department for Multilateral Development Co-operation, negotiating for Sweden on the African Development Fund and serving on the boards of the Global Environment Facility and Climate Investment Funds. Earlier postings included Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP/UN-Habitat in Nairobi and a desk officer role covering trade and EU development cooperation. Prior to her diplomatic career, she worked as an Economist at the EU Delegation in Amman, Jordan (1998–2000), and held early-career positions at the World Bank in Cairo, the European Commission in Brussels, and Lund University. Menander holds an M.Sc. in Economics from Lund University (1997) and studied Arabic in Cairo. She is fluent in Swedish and English, and has additional proficiency in French, German, Danish, Norwegian, and Arabic. She has also chaired Women for Sustainable Growth (W4SG), a non-profit linking the Gulf and Scandinavia.



Pooja Kapur is Additional Secretary (Northern Europe) in the Ministry of External Affairs. A career diplomat who joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1996, Ms. Kapur has served as India's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark from 2021–24 and India's Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia from 2017–21. She was India's G20 Sous-Sherpa during 2024–25 when India was part of the G20 Troika. Ms. Kapur has wide-ranging experience in European and Indo-Pacific affairs, alongside multilateral matters. She has served at Indian Embassies/High Commissions in Paris, London, Kuala Lumpur and Brussels. In the Ministry of External Affairs, she has headed the ASEAN Multilateral (Indo-Pacific) Division and held charges pertaining to India's relationship with Western Europe, South East Asia, the United Nations and the Commonwealth. Ms. Kapur is a frequent speaker at international conferences and events and was the Chief Coordinator of the Delhi Dialogue from 2014–17. Ms. Kapur was a Chevening scholar at the University of Oxford and also has a Masters in Public Administration from the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris, along with a B.A. (Honours) and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Delhi. A university topper and recipient of several academic scholarships and awards, she is a published author.



Pranay Sinha is the Lead for Global Growth & Opportunity Policy Advocacy and South-South Co-operation at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Prior to this, he held positions at the World Food Programme, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), UNDP, and the Government of Delhi, where he focused on development policy and international co-operation.



Rajan Navani is a visionary leader in India's digital and creative economy, serving as the Chairman & Managing Director of JetSynthesys, the most innovative company of the Jetline Group that he chairs. As Co-Chairman of the CII National Committee on Media & Entertainment, he drives innovation and industry growth across video gaming, esports, technology, and entertainment. He also Co-Chairs the India@100 Foundation shaping the Viksit Bharat of 2047 and the Ananta Aspen Center, the foremost institution for values based leadership. He also represents India on several prestigious global and national industry forums, shaping conversations around future tech, entrepreneurship, and digital culture.



Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen is Denmark's Ambassador to the Republic of India and non-resident Ambassador to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives since February 2025. He has had a distinguished career in the Danish Foreign Service, with extensive experience gained from overseas assignments and other international roles, including as Denmark's Ambassador to Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and ASEAN from 2017 to 2020. Throughout his career, Ambassador Kristensen has specialized in international climate and energy policy. In addition to his diplomatic career, Ambassador Kristensen has held a senior position in the private sector as Vice President and Head of Group Public Affairs at Danfoss. He holds a Master of Science (with distinction) in Climate Change and Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London.



Ravichandran Purushothaman is the President of Danfoss India, a subsidiary of the €10 billion Danish family-owned company. With over 30 years of experience, he has been a key driver of Danfoss India's growth, sustainability, and innovation. Under his leadership, the company has expanded to 4,000 employees, four Global Competence Centres, and six factories. He specializes in Strategy and business transformation, Energy efficiency, Electrification and Industrial decarbonization and promotes advanced technologies, startup innovation, university engagement, and policy advocacy in sustainability. Ravichandran Purushothaman is currently Chairman of CII Southern Region, Chairman CII National Water mission and Chairman of the CII task force on cold chain and logistics. He also plays a crucial role in industry-led R&D collaborations with universities, including the Green Strategic Partnership between Denmark and India.



Ravinder Kaur is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Her long-term research focuses on key transformations in the history of modern India. She is the author of Brand New Nation: Capitalist Dreams and Nationalist Designs in Twenty-First-Century India (Stanford University Press, 2020; HarperCollins India, 2021) and, most recently, co-editor of Economic Miracles and Their Afterlives (Duke University Press, 2025). Her current research centres on the histories of the Global South, specifically, the political-economic entanglements across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



Robin Sukhia is Secretary General and CEO of the Sweden-India Business Council (SIBC). A Swedish-Indian, he has worked with India since 1996, initially through venture capital. Since 2005, he has led SIBC, Sweden's largest India-focused business network, driving 1200+ activities to boost bilateral ties. He advises companies, governments, and institutions on Sweden-India relations. In 2016, SIBC was appointed Secretariat to the India Sweden Business Leaders' Roundtable (ISBLRT), initiated by both Prime Ministers. Robin chairs Scandinavian Chemotech, is on ARTPARK's Investment Committee at IISc Bengaluru, and co-founded the Nordic India Strategic Dialogue. He holds a B.Sc. in Business Administration from SUNY

and was Special Advisor to the Vesper Group. An OCI holder, Robin exemplifies how India's diaspora can build strong international partnerships.



Sabrina Lykkegaard Svidt is posted as Science and Innovation Attaché at Innovation Centre Denmark in Bangalore, where she supports collaboration between Danish and Indian stakeholders in research and innovation focusing on the fields of life science, energy, and technology (including space, IA and emerging technologies). Before moving to Bangalore, Sabrina gained experience managing international projects and partnerships at higher education institutions in Denmark, with a strong focus on capacity building and development of long-lasting and mutually beneficial partnerships. Most recently, she worked at the University of Copenhagen, where she was responsible for strategic partnerships in Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. She holds a Master's degree in Political Science from Aarhus University.



Sanjay Kumar is a social entrepreneur and geospatial evangelist. Sanjay has been working towards advancing the role of geospatial knowledge and value in world economy and society. Having Masters and M. Phil in Politics and International Relations, he has special interest in public policy and global development agenda. He lends his time and experience to many not-for-profit organizations, including Open Geospatial Consortium and World Geospatial Industry Council, to help them further their societal goals.



Sara Larsson is the CEO of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India (SCCI), a strategic platform strengthening the Sweden–India sambandh (relationship) across business, policy, and society. The Chamber brings together leaders to navigate geopolitical uncertainty, technological change, and sustainability transitions, while building shared capability along the corridor.



Shivani Jhirwal is a 2018 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service. She is currently working as Under Secretary in Policy Planning and Research Division of Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.



Simmi Saini is affiliated with the Nordic-India Relations project at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI). She holds a Master's degree in International Relations and has a background in research and policy analysis, with a focus on South Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Her previous experience includes research and policy work at the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), the European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS), the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), and the European Parliament. Her work has covered India's foreign relations, including EU-India relations, as well as broader issues of geopolitics, technology, and India's evolving role on the international stage.



Siv Behrendt is the Team Leader for the South Asia region at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, where she is involved in all areas of Denmark's engagement with India. Prior to this, she has held several positions at the MFA including roles in the HR and civil society departments, as well as served as First Secretary at the Embassy of Denmark in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She holds an MA in Political Social Science from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.



Sumit Sharma is the Country Representative of IDCC (Indian-Danish Chamber of Commerce) since June 2026. He has been acting as a bridge-head between Europe and India for the last 20 years. He has previously worked for organisations like VDMA (German Engineering Federation) & AHK (Indo-German Chamber of Commerce) where he was involved in guiding German and European Companies about their India strategy. The Indian Danish Chamber of Commerce brings together people whose business is India. In their networks and forums, experts and members exchange knowledge, intelligence, and hands-on experiences. At IDCC, they directly engage with their members to collect and share critical knowledge on the ever-increasing trade opportunities between India and Denmark.



Teemu Vihervä is the CEO of Kaiku HR Oy group companies having 19 years ofexperience in the staffing industry. He has set up and established Kaiku HR Group ofcompanies which support the Finnish industry with staffing and recruitment servicesUnderstanding the engineering needs of Finnish industry, Kaiku HR expanded intoengineering services and has set and established ECHO Engineering to offerengineering services to Finnish companies.Teemu has built a bridge between Finland and India by setting up subsidiarycompanies, Fill Finn to support Kaiku HR in recruitment services and FinECHOEngineering to support Finnish companies with engineering services from India.



Tinna Sveinsdóttir is the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Iceland in New Delhi and also serves as the Icelandic Consul. She has been in her current role since March 2025. Before her posting to Tinna worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland as an advisor in the Departments of Nordic Cooperation and Arctic Affairs. She holds a Master's degree in International Relations, a Bachelor's degree in Literature, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration. Prior to her career in the Foreign Service Ms. Sveinsdóttir has many years of experience working for an international NGO in the field of Intercultural Learning.



Trym Oust Sonstad is currently (since 2024) Deputy Director at the Section for South Asia and Afghanistan in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has previously been posted to the Royal Embassy of Norway in Beijing (2018–2022), as well as the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations during Norway's stint as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2020–2022). His previous professional experience includes ten years of working as a print journalist.



Ummu Salma Bava is Chairperson and Jean Monnet Chair Professor, Centre for European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Guest Faculty, SS Foreign Services Institute, MEA, Government of India, New Delhi. She has over 35 years of teaching, research and administrative experience and is one of the leading Indian experts on the European Union, EU Member States, and India's foreign and security policy. Her other research areas are Indo-Pacific region, emerging powers, global governance, norms, peace and conflict studies and higher education. Her latest publication are "The European Union's Relations with South Asia", The Routledge Handbook of South Asia: Regions, Security and Connectivity (August 2023), "The European Union and Emerging Powers: Engagement, Cooperation and Contestation", in Beyond the Crises: Potentials of the European Union in the 21st Century, Springer (September 2023), "EU-India Relations - The Strategic Partnership in Light of the European Union's Global Strategy" (Springer 2021). She was on the Academic Advisory Board of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg and Research Advisory Council, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin. She was conferred the Bundesverdienstkreuz by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2012.



Vibha Mehra serves as India Country Manager at Nokia, where she leads the company's strategic presence in one of its most critical markets. In this role, she isresponsible for driving communications and public affairs, strengtheninggovernment engagement, and enhancing Nokia's external positioning. She alsooversees India site strategy, key people initiatives, and corporate socialresponsibility, reinforcing Nokia's reputation as a trusted and responsibletechnology leader.With over 27 years of experience in the technology sector, Vibha brings deepexpertise across strategy, government business, and operational leadership. Prior tojoining Nokia, she held senior leadership roles at global organizations including Microsoft, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, Intel, and General Electric.A strong advocate for diversity and inclusion, Vibha is committed to advancingwomen's participation in technology. She actively mentors talent and supportsinitiatives that promote women in the industry.Vibha holds a master's and bachelor's degree from the University of Mumbai.Beyond her corporate responsibilities, she is actively engaged in social impactinitiatives, particularly in education for underprivileged children.



Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh has held a range of command, training and staff appointments, and served on most classes of ships over his four decades of service in the Indian Navy. He superannuated on 31st July 2025. He excelled in all training courses and graduated with top honours at each

level. He has served in a wide range of Naval & Joint Staff appointments, including Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations) and Vice Chief of Naval Staff at New Delhi. His training command appointments include the Navigation & Direction School, Flag Officer Sea Training and Commandant Naval War College. His operational command appointments include two multi role Frigates, the Western Fleet, and recently as the FOCinC Western Naval Command, in 2024–25, wherein he was responsible for ensuring India's maritime security across the Western IOR, through a period of highly intense and resurgent maritime security challenges, including piracy, drone/ missile attacks on ships, and Op Sindoor. He is the recipient of several awards for his distinguished service. A perennial student and scholar, he has contributed research papers in professional Journals, Seminars & Conferences. He was the lead drafter for the Indian Navy's Maritime Doctrine 2009, Strategic Guidance to Transformation 2014, and Indian Maritime Security Strategy 2015. He has undergone several post Graduation programmes, and holds MA (History), MA (Defence Studies), MSc (Defence Studies), MPhil (Defence Studies), MPhil (Defence & Strategic Studies), and PhD (Arts). Since 01st January 2026, he is serving as Director General of the United Service Institution, Delhi, which is India's oldest think tank on defence and security, founded in 1870.



Ville Andersson has for the past four years worked as Team Leader for South Asia in the Unit for South and Southeast Asia at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. During his more than two decades in the Finnish foreign service, Andersson has gathered extensive experience of Nordic collaboration, structures, and networks, holding several positions in the Secretariat for Nordic Cooperation at the MFA. During his career, Andersson has worked also in the Finnish Embassies in Sofia, Zagreb, and Stockholm.



Vinayak Dalmia is a third generation entrepreneur from the Dalmia Family. Vinayak is founder and Managing Director of Bharat Semi / 3rdiTech- building India's first national security focused semiconductor Fab. Vinayak has extensive experience working at the crossroads of technology and national security- especially in the India-US relationship. Vinayak was educated at UC Berkeley and Cambridge University. He was also invited to be a visiting research fellow at Oxford University.



Vipin Kumar is North India Sales and Operations Head at Össur India, with over 10 years of experience in prosthetics, orthotics, sales, and healthcare solutions. He focuses on business development, strategic partnerships, and customer engagement across the region. Vipin has played an active role in introducing advanced prosthetic and orthotic solutions in India and is passionate about improving access to innovative mobility solutions.



Vir Sanghvi is one of India's most prominent journalists, with a career spanning print, television, books, and new media. Born in London in 1956 and educated at Mayo College, Ajmer; Mill Hill School, London; and Brasenose College, Oxford (PPE), he entered journalism early and rose rapidly. In 1978, at age 22, he became the youngest editor in Indian journalism history as editor of Bombay magazine. He later edited Imprint and, in 1986, Sunday (ABP group), which under his leadership became India's largest-selling English newsmagazine. He subsequently served as Consulting Editor of the ABP group. In 1999, Sanghvi was appointed Editor of the Hindustan Times, Delhi's largest English daily. During his tenure, the paper expanded to multiple editions, notably achieving strong success in Bombay (now Mumbai), where it became the second largest-selling newspaper. He stepped down as Editor in 2003 but remained Editorial Director until 2007, and continues as a regular columnist. Parallel to print, Sanghvi built a distinguished television career, anchoring shows on Doordarshan, DD-CNN, Star Network, NDTV, Discovery Travel & Living, CNBC, CNN News 18, and News X. His election series Mandate With Destiny was adapted into the bestselling book Mandate. His books include Men of Steel (a major bestseller translated into eight Indian languages), Rude Food (winner of the Cointreau Award for Best Food Literature), Madhavrao Scindia: A Biography, and India – Then and Now. In 2015, he co-founded EazyDiner, a leading online restaurant-reservation platform. Sanghvi's awards include the Rajiv Gandhi Award, Lokmanya Tilak Award, and recognition as a "Global Leader of Tomorrow" by the World Economic Forum (1993). He has served on bodies such as the National Integration Council and currently sits on the Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC).



Vivek Sharma leads the growth of businesses and collective engagement of Maersk Group across the Indian Subcontinent Region with the Government. He is based at Delhi and works closely with Maersk's Global Leadership and Chairman's Office. Vivek brings with him wide experience from prior leadership roles with Shell Plc, Tata Group, Adani Group and KPMG. Over the years, he has worked across Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Mergers & Acquisitions, and Strategy Functions across India, Middle East, and South-East Asia. He has extensive experience in energy and infrastructure sectors covering international trade negotiations, multilateral financing arrangements and carbon policies. By education, Vivek is a graduate in Geology and Mining and master's in finance and economics. He is an alumnus of SAID Business School, University of Oxford. He also holds CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) and FRM.

Snapshots


NORDIC
INDIA
DIALOGUE
PABITRA MARGHERITA
INDRANI BAGCHI










NORDIC
INDIA
DIALOGUE
LT COL VARUN PATHAK
SANJAY KUMAR











About Ananta Centre

Ananta Centre is a non-partisan organization that focuses on value-based leadership development and open dialogue on important issues facing Indian society, to help foster its transformation. The organization has no political affiliation and serves to provide a platform and forum that engages civil society, business, governments and other stakeholders on issues of importance to India's development and national security through ethical leadership and constructive dialogues. The Centre is registered under the Indian Trust Act 1882 as a non-tax- exempt organisation to broad base the programmes and funding through sponsorship and membership. The Centre works closely with the Ananta Aspen Centre and is headquartered in New Delhi.

About Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs [NUPI] is a leading centre for research on international issues in areas of particular relevance to Norwegian foreign policy. NUPI communicates research-based insights to the Norwegian public as well as to wider international audiences, and is committed to excellence, relevance and credibility in all our work. NUPI has three main pillars of research and expertise: war and peace, economy and development, and diplomacy and global governance.

NUPI was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 1959. The institute is a state body under the Ministry of Education and Research, but operates independently as a non-political institution in all its professional activities. Main sources of funding for research at NUPI are the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Ministry of Defence. Support also comes from private companies and international funding sources, such as the EU.

About Swedish Institute of International Affairs

The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) is an independent institute and a platform for research and information on international relations and foreign policy. The institute has extensive experience in monitoring and analyzing the world, and is a trusted source of analysis of international relations, foreign affairs and current events. UI strives to create an open conversation about a complex world – a conversation founded in quality research and accessible analysis.

About The Finnish Institute of International Affairs

The Finnish Institute of International Affairs is a research institute whose mission is to produce high quality, topical information on international relations and the EU. The Institute realizes its aims by conducting research as well as by organizing domestic and international seminars and publishing reports on its research and current international issues.

The Institute was established by the Parliament of Finland in its centennial plenum in June 2006 and the Parliament also provides the Institute's basic funding. The Institute is autonomous in its research activities and is governed by a nine-member board, assisted by an advisory council and a scientific advisory council.

About the Institute of International Affairs of Iceland

The goal of the Institute of International Affairs is to be a leader in research on international affairs and Iceland's position on the international stage. It promotes an informed discussion among academics, the public and other parties concerned with Icelandic foreign affairs and international affairs. The purpose of the Institute of International Affairs is also to increase the quality and availability of studies on international affairs and small states in undergraduate and graduate studies at university level, and to be a service organization for business and the public sector. In order to achieve these goals, the Institute of International Affairs strives for increased cooperation between academics, industry and public bodies in the field of international affairs and holds conferences, discussion meetings and lectures on topics related to the Institute's field of work. The institute is a platform for academic international communication and multidisciplinary service projects for business, companies and institutions.

About the Technical University of Denmark

DTU is an international elite technical university that was founded in 1829 with the aim of "developing and utilizing natural and technical science for the benefit of society". DTU's education, research-based advice and innovation rest on a solid foundation of world-class research. Based on technical science and natural science, DTU works to create sustainable value and welfare in society through education, research, research-based advice and innovation. DTU is Denmark's largest engineering training centre, and works closely with education, research, authority advice and innovation contributing to growth and welfare.

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