

INDIA'S EMERGING ROLE IN EVOLVING GLOBAL DYNAMICS



**SEP
25
2025**

THURSDAY
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER



MR M K NARAYANAN
FORMER GOVERNOR OF WEST BENGAL &
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR



MR NANDAN UNNIKRISHNAN
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW
OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION
NEW DELHI



DR SRIKANTH KONDAPALLI
PROFESSOR IN CHINESE STUDIES, CENTRE
FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES, FORMER DEAN,
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY



MS INDRANI BAGCHI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ANANTA
CENTRE

SYNOPSIS

Coupled with the unending Ukraine War and the one-sided Gaza War, US President Donald Trump's 'Tariff War' on nations has sought to re-write geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic realities.

India benefited from the continued purchase of 'cheap' Russian oil when the US and the rest of the West imposed every kind of economic and political sanctions on Moscow. India has not acted upon American threats under two Presidents and European and Australia-Japanese advice for India to stop the import of Russian oil. For once, India has openly defied the West, unlike in the past, where New Delhi did all the same but in studied, stoic silence, without ruffling too many international feathers.

Add to this, India's emerging economic power, and it has consequences for the rest of the world in terms of geo-politics and geo-strategy. Hence, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in China, and also use the occasion to meet with President Xi Jinping after seven years, it did cause many eyebrows to raise, especially in the US and the rest of the West. So did the three-some meeting of the two with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of SCO Summit.

Where does all this lead to? Is India, despite claiming to be the fourth, if not the third largest global power, playing the Global Peter against an emerging Paul, as Indian strategic community had often accused nations like Sri Lanka, Maldives and other smaller neighbours, in the case of their own India / China ties?

SYNOPSIS (CONTD....)

Having failed to insulate ourselves against the possibilities that Trump 2.0 promised, is it wise for India to be seen as swinging to the other end of the strategic spectrum to the other, between the US and China, to be precise, even as continuing to maintain traditional relations with Russia. Then, there are India's friends in Europe, like France, and also nations like Japan, apart from the ASEAN bloc, whatever the emerging equations with the EU.

In the evolving situation, India continues to push its tentative leadership of the Global South, where China used to be a competitor, but after the Prime Minister's recent visit, is Beijing also a compatriot? To begin at the beginning even as India normalises ties with China, it needs a comfort zone, where Beijing does not continue to promote and project Pakistan, where it has got an old/new competition in the US.

With India's southern Ocean frontier increasing in politico-strategic importance, China, for instance, should actually be creating a CBM, confidence-building measure, vis a vis India's Ocean neighbours, where Beijing's actions have been provocative over the past two-plus decades.

In context, what all should India be looking for, especially with its expanding global reach and out-reach, where the Gulf region, Africa and South America too cannot be left out as inconsequential.

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME

5:15 PM Registration & High Tea

6:00 PM Welcome Address

Mr Lakshminarayanan D

President, MMA &

MD, Sundaram Home Finance Ltd

Opening Remarks

Mr N Sathiya Moorthy

Convenor, Policy Matters – Chennai

Keynote Address by the Chief Guest

Mr M K Narayanan

Former Governor of West Bengal &

Former, National Security Advisor

Special Address

Mr Nandan Unnikrishnan

Distinguished Fellow

Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

Dr Srikanth Kondapalli

Professor in Chinese Studies, Centre for East Asian Studies

Former Dean, School of International Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University

Ms Indrani Bagchi

Chief Executive Officer, Ananta Centre

Q & A

7:55 PM Vote of Thanks

Gp Capt R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM

Executive Director, Madras Management Association

8:00 PM End of the seminar

PROFILE



Mr M K Narayanan

*Former Governor of West Bengal &
Former, National Security Advisor*

Mayankodu Kelath Narayanan (born 10 March 1934) is a former Indian Police Service officer. He was the National Security Adviser of India from 2005 to 2010, assuming the role after the demise of his predecessor, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, in January 2005. Subsequently, he served as 19th Governor of West Bengal from 2010 to 2014. The Government of India awarded him the civilian honour of Padma Shri in 1992.

M. K. Narayanan joined the Indian Police Service in 1955 and passed out with the highest marks. After a brief stint as a Sub-Divisional Police Officer in the erstwhile State of Madras, he went on deputation to the Intelligence Bureau in February 1959. The rest of his service career was spent under the Government of India, mainly in the Intelligence Bureau, in which he dealt with a whole range of issues concerning internal and national security.

He headed the Intelligence Bureau (IB) from 1987 to 1990, before heading the Joint Intelligence Committee for a year. He became Chief (a four-star rank, equivalent to an Army general) of the IB again in 1991, before retiring in 1992. He was then appointed Special Adviser (a non-Civil Service appointment) for Internal Security to the Prime Minister of India beginning in May 2004. He was Indian National Security Adviser with the rank of Minister of State from 2005 to 2010. He played a significant role in the negotiation of the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement. He took over as Governor of West Bengal from Gopalkrishna Gandhi, who had a few disagreements with the then CPI(M)-ruled state on critical issues like violence in Nandigram and Singur.

PROFILE



Mr Nandan Unnikrishnan

Distinguished Fellow

Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

Nandan Unnikrishnan is a Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation New Delhi. He joined ORF in 2004. He looks after the Eurasia Programme of Studies. An alumnus of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) he began his career as a journalist with the Press Trust of India (PTI). From 1985 to 1987 he was deputed by PTI to the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA). In 1995 after 15 years in PTI culminating with a three-year posting to Moscow as the Bureau Chief he moved to Business Indias Television Channel - TVI. He joined TVI as the News Coordinator for International Affairs rising to head the channel by 1998. During his tenure with ORF Nandan has participated in several National and International conferences lectured in academic and specialised institutions in India and abroad.

PROFILE



Dr Srikanth Kondapalli

Professor in Chinese Studies, Centre for East Asian Studies

Former Dean, School of International Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University

Srikanth Kondapalli is Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was former Dean of School of International Studies, JNU from 2022-24. He was Chairman of the Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, JNU from 2008-10, 2012-14, 2016-18, 2018-20 and in 2022. He is Chair Professor under the Chair of Excellence of Ministry of Defence since August 2022. He is educated in Chinese studies in India and China with a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies. He learnt Chinese language at Beijing Language & Culture University and was a post-Doctoral Visiting Fellow at People's University, Beijing from 1996-98. He was a Visiting Professor at National Chengchi University, Taipei in 2004, a Visiting Fellow at China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing in May 2007, an Honorary Professor at Shandong University, Jinan in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019; at Jilin University, Changchun in 2014 and at Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, Kunming in 2016 and 2017, a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at People's University since 2014 and a Fellow at Salzburg Global Seminar in 2010. He wrote two books:

- *China's Military: The PLA in Transition in 1999 and*
- *China's Naval Power in 2001.*

He wrote two monographs, and co-edited six volumes:

- *Asian Security & China in 2004*
- *China and its Neighbours in 2010*
- *China's Military and India in 2012*
- *China and the BRICS: Setting up a Different Kitchen in 2016*
- *One Belt One Road - China's Global Outreach in 2017 and*
- *China and Covid-19 - Domestic and External Dimensions in 2020*

and a number of articles in journals and edited volumes - all on China. He received the *K.Subramanyam Award* in 2010 for *Excellence in Research in Strategic and Security Studies*. He is a guest faculty at Indian armed forces units, including at the National Defence College, Army War College, College of Air Warfare, College of Naval Warfare, and College of Defence Management. He is a distinguished fellow at several think-tanks including Vivekananda International Foundation and Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. He supervised more than 30 Ph.D. researchers at JNU and is also an academic advisor for Ph.D. researchers at Al Farabi Kazakh National University and Ablai Khan University at Almaty and Tamkhang University (Taipei). He was the Editor of JNU SIS *International Studies Journal* (being published by the Sage).

PROFILE



Ms Indrani Bagchi

Chief Executive Officer, Ananta Centre

Ms Indrani Bagchi is the Chief Executive Officer at Ananta Centre, India.

She was Associate Editor with The Times of India, where she reported and analyzed foreign policy issues for the newspaper from 2004 until 2022.

As Diplomatic Editor, Indrani covered the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on her news beat, as well as interpreted and analyzed global trends with an Indian perspective.

Earlier, Indrani worked with India Today, a premier news magazine, The Economic Times and The Statesman.

She graduated from Loreto College, Calcutta University with English honours. Indrani was a Reuters Fellow at Oxford University in 1997. In 2010, Indrani was awarded the Chang Lin-Tien fellowship by the Asia Foundation to study US-China relations at Brookings Institution, Washington DC. She is a Fellow of the Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship Class 3 of the Ananta Aspen Centre and a member of Aspen Global Leadership Network.

PROFILE



Mr N Sathiya Moorthy

Convenor, Policy Matters - Chennai

N Sathiya Moorthy is a policy analyst & political commentator, specialising in the study of India's southern neighbours, namely, Maldives and Sri Lanka, and also on Indian politics and political systems, with particular reference to native Tamil Nadu. He has written extensively on these subjects, both as books and newspaper columns and commissioned articles.

Sathiya Moorthy is associated with major newspapers and TV channels, both in India and Sri Lanka and also headed the Chennai Initiative of the Observer Research Foundation since inception in 2001.

A veteran journalist and author, he is the convenor of 'Policy Matters-Chennai'.

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Email:

mma@mmachennai.org

Phone Number

044 - 28291133 / 28291166

Website

www.mmachennai.org

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