

VIDESH SEWA



Sushma Swaraj Institute
of Foreign Service

विदेश मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

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Editor's Desk



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DEAN
SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The quarter April-June 2020 was a particularly challenging one for the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a prolonged lockdown with 'work from home'. As a result, the traditional SSIFS methodology of interactive class room sessions needed to be suspended. However, the Institute's innovative spirit sought to seek opportunities in this challenge.

SSIFS went digital in a big way. In the past, training courses over webinar had been conducted selectively for officers and staff posted in Missions/Posts abroad. Online training almost became the new normal and was mainstreamed for our sessions at all levels. It is noteworthy that Phase-II of Induction Training Programme (ITP) of IFS Officer Trainees-2019 during this time was entirely conducted online. This entailed training through regular online modules as also new ones dealing with cyber security, speed reading, etc. The very first training programme of Interpreters Cadre of MEA was conducted entirely online. Similarly, mandatory training for officers and staff related to promotions and postings was conducted online with a focus on practical application of IMAS, IVFRT, etc.

Once the initial hesitation and some technical glitches were overcome, SSIFS discovered that the digital medium provided a viable option even for normal times. It also enabled the Institute to leverage eminent scholars, academics, experts who were based outside Delhi including in foreign countries as guest faculty. Going forward, SSIFS's endeavour will be on optimum combination of physical classes with online sessions to calibrate a healthy mix.

The International Forum on Diplomatic Training's (IFDT) Steering Group online meeting on June 8 reviewed and finalised IFDT's annual conference calendar in the light of challenges posed by Covid 19. This first IFDT Steering Group meeting at which India was participating decided that India would remain the host of IFDT's annual conference in 2022 to coincide with India@75.

New Delhi
July 2020


[J.S. Mukul]

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Highlights

Training of IFS OTs

Induction Training Programme of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer Trainees (2019 batch) and Diplomats from Bhutan

The classroom sessions and study tours of Induction Training Programme (ITP) for 30 IFS Officer Trainees (OTs) of 2019 Batch and 2 diplomats from Bhutan, which commenced in December 2019, were disrupted in the last week of March 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in April this year, the OTs and Bhutanese diplomats performed duty in the Control Room of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and assisted in dealing with MEA's COVID-19 related work. Specifically, they were assigned various countries/regions to answer queries from Indian citizens/NRIs/PIOs in these countries/regions. This provided the OTs firsthand experience on crisis management.

Subsequently, the OTs participated in an online Cyber-Security Course by Gujarat Forensic Sciences University (GFSU), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The OTs also had an online training programme on 'Speed Reading and Memory Training' by IRIS Chicago, USA.

Phase-II of ITP commenced on 15 June 2020 through webinar and is in progress.



(Deployment of IFS OTs at COVID-19 Control Room, MEA, New Delhi)



(Address by Dean (SSIFS) to IFS OTs in the Phase-II of ITP)

Pre-Promotion Training of MEA Interpreter Cadre

Online Pre-Promotion Training conducted for 7 officers of Interpreter Cadre of MEA was conducted by SSIFS from 6-17 April 2020.

Training of MEA Officials

IMAS (accounts) Training Programme was conducted by SSIFS from 10-12 June through webinar. 90 MEA officials participated in the training.

A 1-day IVFRT (consular) training was conducted on 13 June through webinar. The training was attended by 51 participants.



(Speaker addressing on webinar to participants of IMAS Training Programme)

Cooperation with IFDT

Amb. J.S. Mukul, Dean (SSIFS) participated in an online meeting of IFDT (International Forum on Diplomatic Training) Steering Group on 8 June. Amb. Mukul reiterated India's keen interest to host the annual IFDT meeting in India in 2022 to coincide with India@75. IFDT has agreed to the proposal.

Amb Mukul also took part in an online conference 'The Impact of Covid-19 on Diplomatic Training: Best Practices, Recommendations and Future Plans' on 10 June hosted by the Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies of Bahrain.

Training of Foreign Diplomats

The following training programmes for foreign diplomats, which were scheduled to be held at SSIFS in the 2nd quarter of 2020, were postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic:

S.No	Programmes	Date
1	69th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats	16 Mar – 9 Apr 2020
2	3rd Special Course for Pacific Island Countries	13-25 Apr 2020
3	2nd Special Course for Dominican Republic	13-25 Apr 2020
4	1st Special Course for Argentina	13-25 Apr 2020
5	1st Special Course for El Salvador	13-25 Apr 2020
6	2nd Special Course for Kenya	27 Apr – 9 May 2020
7	1st Special Course for Ethiopia	27 Apr – 9 May 2020
8	1st Special Course for Zambia	27 Apr – 9 May 2020
9	1st Special Course for Oman	8-20 June 2020

MoUs Signed by SSIFS

Till date, SSIFS has signed 87 Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with counterpart institutions abroad.

List of MoUs in Chronological Order

Sl No.	Name of country	Date	Sl No.	Name of country	Date
1	Peru	26 May 1997	39	Iraq	23 August 2013
2	Russia	10 June 1999	40	Liberia	11 September 2013
3	Uruguay	06 December 1999	41	Kuwait	08 November 2013
4	Sudan	09 April 2000	42	Macedonia	17 December 2013
5	Chile	10 August 2000	43	Bahrain	19 February 2014
6	Argentina	30 August 2000	44	Fiji	19 November 2014
7	Guyana	28 November 2000	45	Costa Rica	16 March 2015
8	Croatia	05 January 2001	46	Qatar	25 March 2015
9	Panama	02 February 2001	47	Mongolia	17 May 2015
10	Egypt	03 February 2001	48	Trinidad & Tobago	05 June 2015
11	Colombia	05 March 2001	49	Turkmenistan	11 July 2015
12	Cuba	13 March 2002	50	Jordan	11 October 2015
13	Tunisia	07 May 2002	51	Maldives	11 October 2015
14	Palestine	29 August 2003	52	Montenegro	20 May 2016
15	Canada	13 October 2003	53	Morocco	31 May 2016
16	Uzbekistan	06 November 2003	54	Ghana	13 June 2016
17	Bulgaria	28 July 2004	55	Intra-BRICS	16 October 2016
18	Afghanistan	01 September 2004	56	Kyrgyzstan	20 December 2016
19	Venezuela	02 September 2004	57	Turkey	1 May 2017
20	Namibia	24 February 2005	58	Spain	30 May 2017
21	Norway	17 June 2005	59	Germany	31 May 2017
22	Saudi Arabia	24 June 2005	60	Dominican Republic	03 October 2017
23	Mexico	21 October 2005	61	Italy	30 November 2017
24	Indonesia	23 November 2005	62	Syria	25 January 2018
25	Ecuador	18 July 2006	63	Oman	11 February 2018
26	Romania	23 October 2006	64	Azerbaijan	04 April 2018
27	Brazil	12 September 2007	65	Guatemala	7 May 2018
28	Serbia	17 September 2007	66	Ethiopia	9 May 2018
29	Philippines	05 October 2007	67	Myanmar	10 May 2018
30	Nigeria	15 October 2007	68	Netherlands	23 May 2018
31	Czech Republic	19 November 2007	69	Somalia	5 June 2018
32	Ukraine	28 March 2008	70	Greece	18 June 2018
33	South Africa	04 June 2010	71	Suriname	20 June 2018
34	IBSA	18 October 2011	72	Seychelles	24 June 2018
35	Korea	21 March 2012	73	UAE	25 June 2018
36	Yemen	03 April 2012	74	Cambodia	29 August 2018
37	Bangladesh	10 February 2013	75	Malta	17 September 2018
38	Iran	04 May 2013	76	Tanzania	16 October 2018

Sl No.	Name of country	Date	Sl No.	Name of country	Date
77	Papua New Guinea	19 February 2019	83	Thailand	10 October 2019
78	Paraguay	06 March 2019	84	Sierra Leone	13 October 2019
79	Gambia	07 March 2019	85	Saudi Arabia	29 October 2019
80	Bolivia	29 March 2019	86	Kenya	03 December 2019
81	Zambia	21 August 2019	87	Portugal	14 February 2020
82	Lao PDR	06 September 2019			

Of the 87 MoUs to-date, a majority ie. 44 have been concluded since May 2014

SSIFS' Online Presence

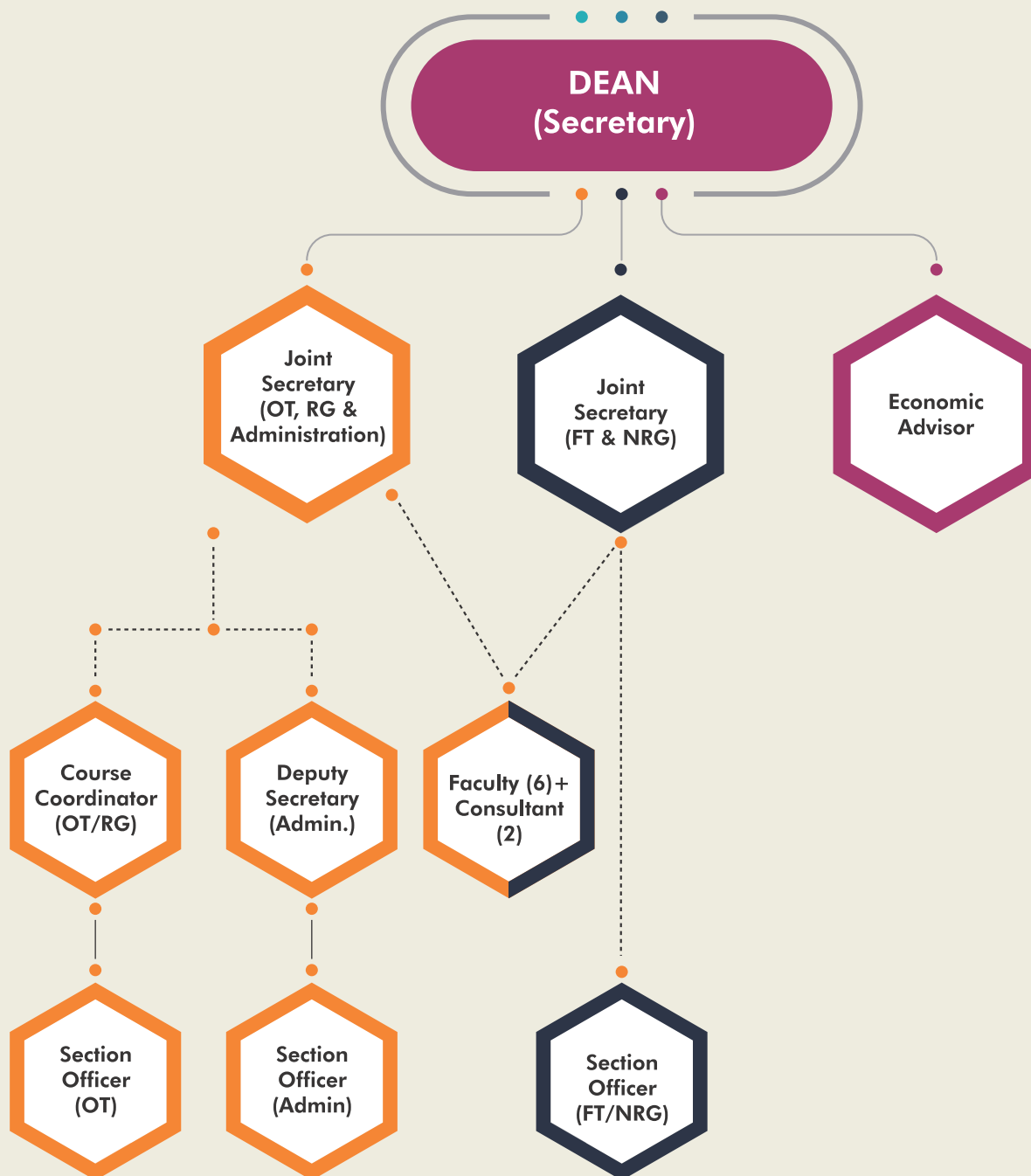
SSIFS has an active online presence. Links are given below:

Website of SSIFS:	https://meafsi.gov.in/
SSIFS Alumni Portal:	https://SSIFSalumni.gov.in/
SSIFS's Twitter:	https://twitter.com/SSIFS_MEA
SSIFS's Facebook Page:	https://www.facebook.com/SSIFS.MEA.NEWDELHI/
SSIFS's Flickr Page:	https://www.flickr.com/photos/meafsi

Welcome/Farewell

SSIFS bid farewell to (i) Col. Mayank Chaubey, Director/Consultant, whose term ended in May 2020 (ii) Mr. Bal Krishna Anand, PPS, who left on his posting to CGI Sydney.

SSIFS Organogram





About Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) was established in 1986 by the Government of India primarily to cater to the professional training needs of the Indian Foreign Service and the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. SSIFS has diversified its activities to include Courses for foreign diplomats in its efforts to build bridges of friendship and cooperation with countries around the world and Courses of interest to staff and officers at all levels of the Ministry of External Affairs as well as other Civil Services. The Institute is located at Baba Gangnath Marg, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi. SSIFS is headed by the Dean, a senior Foreign Service officer of the rank of Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. The current Dean is Amb J.S. Mukul. SSIFS, primarily has an extensive guest faculty drawn from experts in the field of academics and research, the media, public life, industry and trade, senior serving and retired diplomats and other government officials.

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