

REPORT

MERI

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

A Report on the MERI Dialogue 5.0

New Delhi, Feb 21, 2025



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A Report on the MERI Dialogue 5.0

on

India and East Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

Organised by

MERI Centre for International Studies (CIS),

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 MERI Dialogue 5.0 on India and East Asia: Challenges and Opportunities was organised by the MERI Centre for International Studies (CIS), in New Delhi on February 21, 2025. Twenty-three experts from India, Republic of Korea (ROK), Taiwan, Kazakhstan and Japan participated in the Conference. MERI Group of Institutions had earlier organised four Dialogues.



1.2 Six scholars made presentations. A copy of the Programme and list of participants are placed at Appendix# 1 and 2 respectively.

1.3 MERI Dialogue 5.0 was attended by 30 experts from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi, India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi, NatStrat, New Delhi, former diplomats from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, scholars & faculties from MERI Group of Institutions, New Delhi, diplomats from the embassies of Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea (RoK), Taiwan and other Track II organisations.



OBJECTIVES

2.1 MERI Dialogue 5.0 was aimed at fostering dialogue and rejuvenating India's historical, economic, cultural, and strategic ties with the East Asian countries of Japan, China and the Republic of Korea. India's political, national security and economic policy objectives are dynamic and need to be constantly reviewed and modified based on emerging developments in the East Asia. India would like to enhance economic engagement with East Asian countries. The said Dialogue examined the possibilities of enhancing India's cooperation on issues of common interest pertaining to economic engagement and people to people relation. The conference brought together domain experts, diplomats, academicians, research scholars and students to discuss the growing importance of East Asia in international arena.



2.2 MERI Dialogue 5.0 attempted to assess the importance of historical links in today's context. In view of India's growing strategic, geopolitical, economic and cultural interests in East Asia, such an assessment would be useful. It explored current connectivity and possibility of establishing new linkages thereby connecting India with East Asia. The main objectives included the followings:

- To gain in-depth knowledge of historical ties of India with East Asia
- To examine economic ties between India and East Asian countries of Japan, China and Republic of Korea
- To understand the challenges that obstructs India's relations with East Asia.
- To explore the possibilities of cooperation to consolidate bilateral and multilateral ties between India and East Asian countries of Japan, China and Republic of Korea



3 POINTS FROM PAPERS/SPEECHES

3.1 The inaugural ceremony started with the lighting of the lamp and singing of national anthem. Prof Lalit Aggarwal, Vice-President, MERI Group of Institutions welcomed the delegates and participants and highlighted the crucial interplay between geopolitics, academic research, and economic growth, emphasizing how these elements collectively shape India's evolving role in East Asia. His insights underscored the importance of strategic partnerships and intellectual contributions in strengthening India's position on the global stage.





3.2 Prof. (Dr.) Ramakant Dwivedi, Head, MERI Centre for International Studies and Director, India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi provided valuable insights on the theme of the MERI Dialogue 5.0. He elaborated on the evolving geopolitical landscape, economic interdependencies and strategic collaborations between India and East Asian nations. Highlighting key challenges such as trade dynamics, security concerns, and regional stability, he emphasized the vast opportunities for academic research, policy development, and economic partnerships.

3.3 Shri I. P. Aggarwal, Chairman, Triveni Educational & Social Welfare Society, New Delhi and President MERI Group of Institutions, acknowledged the esteemed presence of the dignitaries and highlighted the significance of the MERI Dialogue in fostering academic exchanges and strategic policymaking. He emphasized MERI's commitment to nurturing intellectual discourse and preparing future leaders to navigate the complexities of India's engagement with East Asia. His words reinforced the importance of collaboration between academia, industry, and policymakers in addressing regional challenges and harnessing emerging opportunities. His address set the tone for meaningful discussions, encouraging participants to explore innovative solutions and collaborative approaches to strengthen India's engagement with East Asia.





3.4 Amb. Skand R Tayal, former Indian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and a member of the Advisory Committee of the MERI Centre for International Studies, delivered an insightful address, sharing his vast diplomatic experience and expertise on India's relations with East Asia. He emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships, economic diplomacy, and cultural exchanges in strengthening India's position in the region. He provided valuable perspectives on trade, investment opportunities, and geopolitical challenges shaping India's foreign policy. His address set the stage for the speakers who followed, each contributing their expertise on key aspects of India-East Asia relations, fostering a rich and engaging discussion.



3.5 Amb. Ashok Kumar Sharma, former Indian ambassador to Finland and Kazakhstan and a member of the Advisory Committee of the MERI Centre for International Studies, delivered a thought-provoking address, shedding light on India's strategic interests in East Asia and its broader implications for global diplomacy. He emphasized the role of economic cooperation, technological advancements, and multilateral engagements in strengthening India's presence in the region. Drawing from his diplomatic experience, he highlighted lessons from India's partnerships with number of countries, underscoring the importance of innovation, trade policies, and sustainable development in shaping international relations. His address provided valuable insights, enriching the discourse on India's evolving geopolitical and economic landscape. He emphasized the importance of India's rise as a major power in Asia, expanding its global presence through trade, commerce and strategic partnerships.



3.6 The first session underscored the critical role of economic ties in an increasingly interconnected world. In shaping global growth, stability, and development, economic relationships between nations are pivotal. At the core of these connections lie three key areas: energy, trade and commerce & connectivity. These pillars not only fuel economic growth but also promote deeper geopolitical cooperation and integration across borders. India and Central Asia share a long-standing history of economic, political and cultural ties, which have evolved into a stable and mature partnership in an ever-changing global landscape. Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan present significant opportunities and challenges for an emerging power like India both from geopolitical and geo-economic perspective. These nations, with their strategic positioning and resource wealth, offer avenues for collaboration that can enhance India's role on the global stage, while also presenting complex dynamics that require careful navigation.



3.7 Prof. M. Badrul Alam, former Head, Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, emphasized the historical and contemporary aspects of India-Japan relations. He provided detailed account of the diplomatic engagements between Delhi and Tokyo and their impact on foreign policy. He underscored the 1.1 importance of the role of nuclear agreements, cultural exchanges, and technological cooperation between the two countries. The transition of global politics from the Cold War era (1945) to the end of the Cold War (1991) and the rise of multipolar diplomacy post-2010. The emergence of QUAD and other multilateral alliances, with Japan taking a leadership role. India and Japan have historically enjoyed warm relations, reinforced through diplomatic efforts, trade partnerships, and technological collaborations. The 1950s saw the rise of Japan as a global economic power, with Toyota and Honda playing pivotal roles in industrial development. The concept of "Rebalancing Diplomacy" in the 1990s further strengthened India-Japan ties, marking Japan's shift towards a proactive foreign policy.

3.8 Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi – India - China Relations: Challenges & Opportunities - elaborated on the complex dynamics between India and China, focusing on: China being the most populous country with 1.53 billion people and a massive economic presence. The role of China’s military, with 1.8 million soldiers, making it a key player in global security affairs. Economic influence: China’s GDP stands at 40 trillion dollars, making it a dominant force in global trade. India’s Economic and Strategic Response. India has witnessed a significant shift in its economic approach towards China, with policies aimed at balancing trade deficits and reducing dependency on Chinese imports. India’s public sentiment has also been evolving, with nearly 20-70% of Bollywood films and pop culture elements being influenced by China. The importance of mutual respect and cooperation in regional security and trade agreements was emphasized. Border Disputes and Military Standoff The border disputes between India and China, particularly in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, remain a point of contention. The Doklam crisis and other military confrontations have reinforced the need for strong diplomatic negotiations to maintain regional stability. On October 24, a significant discussion on mutual military disengagement took place, highlighting the delicate balance of power in the region.



3.9 Prof. Jitendra Uttam, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi - India- Korea Relations: Challenges & Opportunities - 4. South Korea’s Engagement with India. The bilateral economic cooperation between India and South Korea was a major discussion point. The economic opportunities for India in sectors like technology, automotive industries, and defence cooperation with South Korea were explored. Experts addressed cross-cultural challenges and the need for stronger diplomatic ties. Multilateral Engagements: G20, BRICS, and ASEAN. The role of India in multilateral forums like G20, BRICS, and ASEAN was analysed. Experts discussed India’s active participation in global decision-making processes and how it influences trade and security policies in East Asia. Border Security and Infrastructure Development The importance of infrastructure development along India’s borders, particularly in response to Chinese investments in border regions, was discussed. The need for India to counterbalance China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through strategic projects like the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) was highlighted.



and East Asia: Challenges & Opportunities

Friday, February 21, 2025 • 6:00 PM



3.10 Mr. Bhuyan, Senior Journalist, a distinguished senior journalist, addressed the gathering with insightful perspectives on India's evolving role in East Asia. His speech focused on the intersection of media, diplomacy, and public perception in shaping India's foreign policy. Media's Role in Geopolitics. Mr. Singh emphasized the crucial role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing foreign policy decisions. He discussed how the portrayal of India's relations with East Asian nations in international and domestic media affects diplomatic engagements. He pointed out the need for responsible journalism in reporting geopolitical conflicts, trade issues, and diplomatic efforts.



3.11 Following the insightful addresses by various speakers, a dynamic discussion and Q&A session was conducted by Professor Sadanand Pandey and Dr. S.S. Mishra, Associate Professor at MERI. The session provided an opportunity for participants to engage with experts on key geopolitical, economic, and strategic issues related to India's foreign policy, particularly in the East Asian and global context. India's Strategic Position in Global Diplomacy. The discussion focused on India's evolving role in world affairs, emphasizing its position as an emerging global power. The importance of multilateral engagement through forums like G20, BRICS, and QUAD was highlighted. India's diplomatic balancing between the United States, Russia, China, and East Asian nations was analysed.







MERI DIALOGUE 5.0

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

India and East Asia: Challenges & Opportunities



  Bilateral Trade: USD 115.82 Bn (Year 2023 - 2024)   Bilateral Trade: USD 27.52 Bn (Year 2023 - 2024)   Bilateral Trade: USD 22.85 Bn (Year 2023 - 2024)

Friday, February 21, 2025 • Time: 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Management Education and Research Institute

Affiliated to GGSIPU, New Delhi; Approved by AICTE, Ministry of Education, NAAC Accredited & A+ Grade Institute by GGSIPU & Govt. of NCT of Delhi

MERI Centre for International Studies

📍 52-55, Institutional Area, D Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 INDIA

ABOUT MERI GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS

MERI Group is a premier academic institution providing quality education in India for the past 37 years in the States of New Delhi and Haryana. MERI-Group is an ISO 9001:2015 certified & NAAC accredited institution. It has established itself as a Centre of Excellence in education, with focus on providing quality education in the fields of Engineering, Management, Law, Journalism, Information Technology, Teacher's Training and School Education. Presently, five academic institutions are being operated by the Group in New Delhi and NCR.

Presently, MERI-Group has 30 global partnerships with reputed Universities and Educational Institutions from Thailand, China, South Korea, France, Germany, Bulgaria and Canada for students & faculty exchange, research and related academic activities. MERI Group of Institutions is striving to help youth to develop their skills and values by not just letting them go through life but grow through life.

MERI Centre for International Studies strives to make a pioneering contribution in promoting the study of International Relations, International Business and Economic Studies, Science & Technology especially in the emerging areas of Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence etc. It aims at advancing knowledge and understanding of international affairs through theoretical and interdisciplinary lenses.

ABOUT MERI DIALOGUE 5.0

MERI Dialogues 5.0 is an intellectual event that aims to bring together the dignitaries, domain experts, diplomats, academicians, technocrats, entrepreneurs, research scholars and students to discuss the growing importance of Asia. India's political, national security and economic policy objectives are dynamic and need to be constantly reviewed and modified based on emerging developments in the neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood. India would like to enhance partnership with East Asia and strengthen cooperation on issues of common interest related to security, economic engagement and people to people cooperation.

It is a venture that will explore current trends, challenges and opportunities in the context of geo-strategic, geopolitical and geo-economic scenario. It would discuss the diverse perspectives on political relations, trade & commerce, role of soft power in enhancing cooperation and economic ties. The conference also aims at exploring the methods and concepts for advancing cooperation between India and East Asia countries.

KEY AGENDAS

- **Economic Co-operation**
- **Cultural & Educational Cooperation**
- **Scientific & Technical Co-operation**

OBJECTIVES

- To examine India's ties with East Asian countries of China, Japan & the Republic of Korea.
- To understand the challenges that obstruct India's relations with East Asian countries of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
- To explore the possibilities for future cooperation to consolidate bilateral and multi lateral ties between India and East Asian countries of China, Japan & the Republic of Korea.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Domain Experts
- Academicians
- Corporate Executives & Entrepreneurs
- Researchers
- Diplomats
- Technocrats
- Journalists
- Students

ABOUT MERI DIALOGUES

Management Education & Research Institute has been at the forefront of education and thought leadership, offering high-quality academic programs, and fostering global dialogues. Through events like the MERI Dialogues, the MERI Centre for International Studies encourages active student participation in global issues, shaping future leaders who understand the complexities of the modern world. MERI has previously organized four quarterly series of events focusing on the geo-economic, geo-cultural, and geo-strategic partnerships, as well as future trade possibilities between India and other nations in Asia. MERI Dialogues are immensely important as they help foster cooperation and build India's alliances with other world economies. Keeping this in mind, the previous MERI Dialogues were conducted on the following themes:

MERI Dialogue 1.0 - India and Middle East Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

MERI Dialogue 2.0 - India and Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

MERI Dialogue 3.0 - India and Europe: Challenges and Opportunities

MERI Dialogue 4.0 - India Relations with Central & South East Asia: Challenges & Opportunities

Above Dialogues have resulted in publication of the books.

EVENT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY · FEBRUARY 21, 2025

1500hrs Onwards (Inaugural Session)

Welcome Address	Prof. Lalit Aggarwal Vice President MERI Group of Institutions, New Delhi
About the Conference	Prof. (Dr.) Ramakant Dwivedi Head, Centre for International Studies, MERI and Director, India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi
Address by Guest of Honour	Shri. I.P. Aggarwal Hon'ble Chairman, Triveni Educational and Social Welfare Society, New Delhi

Perspectives

Ambassador Ashok Kumar Sharma

Former Indian Ambassador to Finland and Kazakhstan

Ambassador Skand R Tayal

Former Indian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan

India-Japan Relations: Challenges & Opportunities

Prof. M. Badrul Alam

Former Head, Dept. of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

India-China Relations: Challenges & Opportunities

Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli

Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

India-Korea Relations: Challenges & Opportunities

Prof. Jitendra Uttam

Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Dr. Anil Singh, Senior Journalist

Discussants & Question & Answer Session

Prof. Sadanand Pandey, MERI

Dr. S. S. Misra, Associate Professor, MERI

Summing Up

Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Khurana, Advisor, MERI Group of Institutions

Felicitation

Vote of Thanks

Prof. (Dr.) Deepshikha Kalra, Dean, MERI

High Tea (1800hrs)

CHIEF PATRONS

Shri I. P. Aggarwal, Hon'ble Chairman, Triveni Educational and Social Welfare Society, New Delhi
Prof. Lalit Aggarwal, Vice President, MERI Group of Institutions, New Delhi

CHIEF COORDINATORS

Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Khurana, Advisor, MERI Group of Institutions
Prof. (Dr.) Ramakant Dwivedi, Head, Centre for International Studies, MERI &
Director, India Central Asia Foundation, New Delhi
Prof. (Dr.) Deepshikha Kalra, Dean, MERI

ORGANISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Prof. Sadanand Pandey, MERI
Dr. Richa Gupta, Assistant Professor, MERI
Dr. S. S. Misra, Associate Professor, MERI
Dr. Sangeeta, Assistant Professor, MERI

CONTACT PERSONS

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Annexure # II

LIST OF PAPER PRESENTERS AND PARTICIPANTS

S. No.	Name	Position	University/Institute/Diplomatic Mission
1.	Sh. I.P. Aggarwal	Chairman	Triveni Educational and Social Welfare Society, New Delhi
2.	Prof. Lalit Aggarwal	Vice-President	Management Education and Research Institute (MERI) Group of Institutions, New Delhi
3.	Prof. Rakesh Khurana	Advisor	MERI Group of Institutions, New Delhi
4.	Prof. (Dr.) Ramakant Dwivedi	Head	Centre for International Studies, MERI Group of Institutions, New Delhi
5.	Prof. (Dr.) Deepshikha Kalra	Dean	MERI College, New Delhi
6.	Prof. Sadanand Pandey	Professor	MERI College, New Delhi
7.	Dr. S. S. Misra	Associate Professor	MERI College, New Delhi
8.	Amb. Ashok Kumar Sharma	Former Indian Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Finland. Currently President ICAF	India Centre Asia Foundation, New Delhi
9.	Prof. M. Badrul Alam	Former Head	Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamic University, New Delhi
10.	Amb. Skand R. Tayal	Former Indian Ambassador to Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea	Member, Advisory Committee, MERI Centre for International Studies, New Delhi
11.	Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli	Former Dean, School of International Studies (SIS)	Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
12.	Prof. Jitendra Uttam	Professor Centre for East Asian Studies	Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
13.	Mr. Azat Serikbossyn	Deputy Head of Mission	Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, New Delhi, India

14.	Ms. Sarita Yadav	Research Scholar	Centre for South & Central Asian Studies, SIS, Punjab Central University, Bhatinda, Punjab
15.	Mr. Rakesh Kumar	Research Scholar	Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
16.	Prof. Hem Chand Pande	Former Dean, School of Language Literature and Culture Studies	Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
17.	Mr. Rahul Gupta	Research Scholar	School of Computational and Integrative Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
18.	Ms. Minsum Kim	Minister Counsellor,	Embassy of the Republic of Korea Plot No. 4 & 5, 50-G, Shantipath Chanakyapuri New Delhi-110021
19.	Dr. Manish Barma	Research, Associate	East Asian Studies, SIS, JNU, New Delhi
20.	Mr. William Lee	New Delhi Correspondent	Centre News Agency, Taiwan
21.	Ms. Kaveri Jain	Visiting Faculty	Amity University, Noida
22.	Mr. Wilson Chang	Counsellor	Taipei Economic and Culture Centre
23.	Dr. Gurnad S Sodhi	Managing Director	Thyssenkrupp Marine System India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi
24.	Ms. Ashima Jha	Youth Ambassador	The Diplomatic Academy, Vasant Vihar
25.	Dr. Sangeeta	Assistant Professor	MERI College, New Delhi
26.	Dr. Richa Gupta	Assistant Professor	MERI College, New Delhi