



INTERNATIONAL  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
NEW DELHI

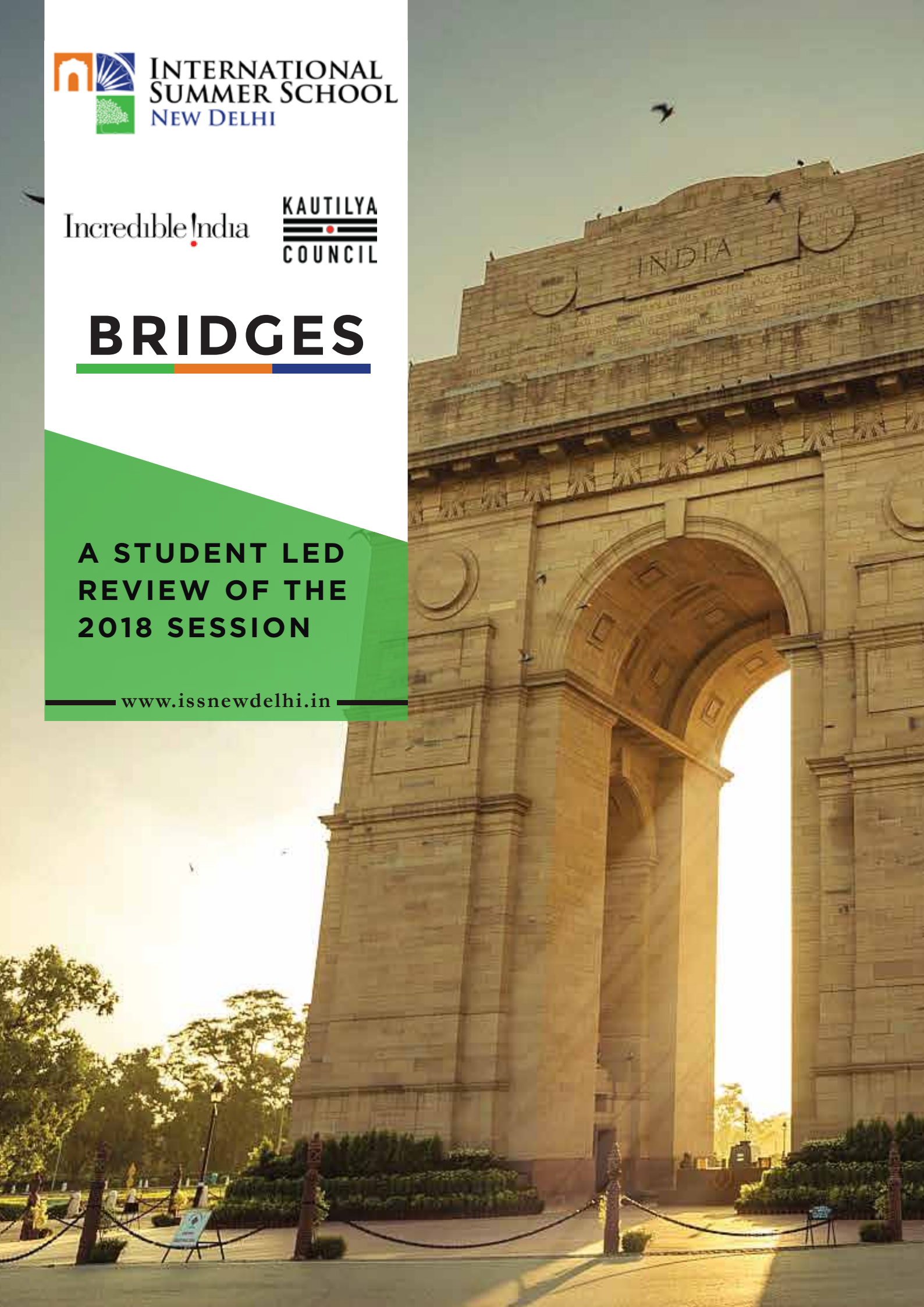
Incredible India

KAUTILYA  
COUNCIL

# BRIDGES

A STUDENT LED  
REVIEW OF THE  
2018 SESSION

[www.issnewdelhi.in](http://www.issnewdelhi.in)





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## FOREWORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

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ATHITHI DEVO BHAVAH

Dear Reader,

On behalf of the International Summer School (ISS, [www.issnewdelhi.in](http://www.issnewdelhi.in)), I am pleased to share with you this year's version of '*Bridges*', our annual e-magazine that provides highlights from the recently concluded session of the 2018 session.

Officially, the ISS takes place under the banner of the Government's Incredible India campaign. A notion in Sanskrit which is very much linked to this campaign is that of '*Atithi Devo Bhavah*', which can be translated as '*Consider the Guest as God*'. The hospitality which was extended to the students in their capacity as representatives of their respective countries as well as of their institutions was very much in line with this notion.

As this magazine will show, the ISS offers its students a platform to engage in friendships that will last long after the program is over.

These friendships amongst individuals with the potential to become future leaders will go a long way towards the fostering of international goodwill and cultural understanding for the next several decades.

I hope you find the time to go through this magazine and look forward to your continued support!

With warm regards from New Delhi,  
Amjad Ali Khan

# OVERVIEW OF THE ISS

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The *International Summer School, New Delhi* (ISS, [www.issnewdelhi.in](http://www.issnewdelhi.in)) is an intensive, six-week academic program that brings together students from across the world over the course of a summer in New Delhi, India's capital. The program is convened annually under the banner of the Government's acclaimed *Incredible India* campaign and with regular support from the *Ministry of External Affairs* over the years.

The ISS aims at promoting international goodwill and cross-cultural dialogue amongst promising young individuals, developing their potential as future leaders in government, business and civil society; with India as a study model, it offers undergraduate course modules & experiences which introduce the students to a range of issues & debates that are shaping contemporary developing societies.

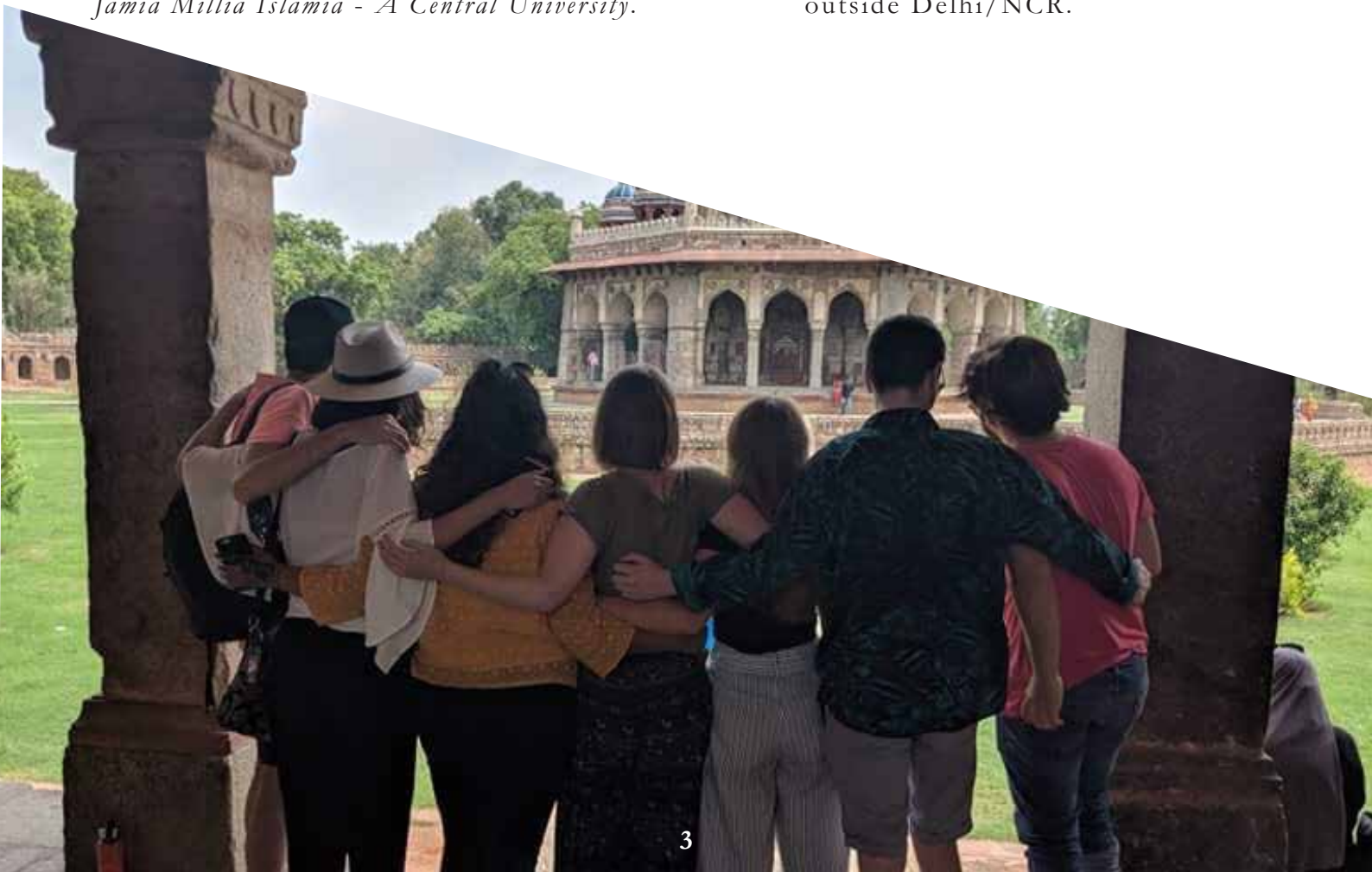
## VENUE & PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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The 2018 session of the program took place from Sunday 23 June to Friday 3 August at the *Nehru Memorial Museum & Library* which is located inside the historic Teen Murti House, the official residence of India's first Prime Minister. Past ISS sessions between 2013 & 2017 have successfully taken place at the *Jawaharlal Nehru University* (JNU) and *Jamia Millia Islamia - A Central University*.

The six-week ISS session has been divided into two components:

- A** A *four-week* academic session that is held in New Delhi; and
- B** An optional *two-week* volunteer & service learning experience that is primarily held outside Delhi/NCR.





# COURSE MODULES

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Our course modules include:

- 1 *Democracy, Governance & International Relations;*
- 2 *Growth, Development & Sustainability;*
- 3 *Society, Culture & Heritage;* and
- 4 *Innovation, Technology & the Future of Work* (2019 session onwards).

The faculty delivering lectures as part of these modules are distinguished academics from institutions such as JNU, Jamia, Delhi University, Ambedkar University, Ashoka University, Shiv Nadar University, OP Jindal Global University and the South Asian University, among others from India as well as overseas.

A fifth module, *Service Learning*, allows students to engage with India through a series of workshops, excursions and a volunteer experience as well as to build on the knowledge gained from the other three modules.





## CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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SPECIAL INTERACTIONS,  
HINDI, YOGA AND  
TOURISM

The academic syllabus at the ISS is supplemented by seminars scheduled throughout the program which allow students to interact with eminent speakers on topics that are relevant to India. Moreover, visits to sites of historical & cultural significance are planned over the course of the six weeks, including excursions to Agra and Jaipur, as are introductory lessons on the Hindi language and yoga classes in partnership with the *Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga*.

## GLOBAL YOUTH COMMUNITY

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50 COUNTRIES &  
COUNTING

Since 2013, the ISS has had representation from countries such as Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Denmark, Fiji, France, Germany, Haiti, Indonesia, Italy, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Myanmar, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Uzbekistan, Vietnam & Yemen, in addition to students originating from different states & regions of India.



# INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS

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Many of these participants are or have been students at some of the top institutions of the world with which the ISS has formal collaborations and/or arrangements in place, with the *University of California*, the *University of Oxford*, the *University of Tokyo*, the *Asian University for Women in Chittagong*, the *National University of Singapore*, the *University of Adelaide* and the *Royal University of Bhutan* being just a few among them.

The partnership with the *University of California* (UC) is a particularly important one for the ISS. Since 2014, the ISS and the UC Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) have had an agreement whereby students from across all ten campuses of the UC system are able to participate in the program while automatically receiving academic credits amounting to 12 quarter/ 8 semester UC units upon successful completion. This is a model partnership which has since been replicated with some of the other aforementioned institutions as well.







Ministry of External Affairs



High Commission of India  
Dhaka, Bangladesh



India Bhutan Foundation

MÉXICO  
GOBIERNO DE LA REPÚBLICA



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Over the years, apart from the *Ministry of External Affairs*, entities such as the *ASEAN Secretariat*, the *High Commission of India in Bangladesh* and the *India Bhutan Foundation* have provided their backing to the ISS by way of financial and/ or other support. Such support has taken the form of ten annual India-ASEAN Goodwill Scholarships for students representing various ASEAN Member States nationals as part of the Government of India's '*Act East Policy*', Indian Student Visa fee waivers, expedition of the visa application process and airfare for nationals from specific countries.

A recent partnership that was established between the ISS and the *Embassy of Mexico* has also seen considerable success. As part of its official mandate, the Mexican mission in New Delhi conducted a comprehensive outreach among several higher educational institutions across Mexico in order to ensure that high performing students are able to partake in a unique study abroad experience in India. For the 2018 session, this resulted in over 400 applications from Mexican students and, eventually, the admission of six of them into the program. Formal relationships are now being developed with other diplomatic missions in New Delhi so that the diversity of the ISS student body can continually be enriched.

## ISS IN 2019

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Next year's session of the program will be held from Sunday 23 June to Friday 2 August 2019. The ISS has recently entered into a partnership with the *Esha Centre* which will help with the growth and evolution of the program while receiving continued guidance from its advisory body in the form of the *Kautilya Council*.





# HIGHLIGHTS

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FROM THE FIRST  
FOUR WEEKS





**MS. SUHASINI  
HAIDAR**

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**DIPLOMATIC & STRATEGIC AFFAIRS  
EDITOR, THE HINDU**



**PROF. A.K.  
SHIVA KUMAR**

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**ADVISOR WITH UNICEF WHO  
TEACHES AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY,  
THE INDIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
& ASHOKA UNIVERSITY**





**AMBASSADOR  
T.C.A. RAGHAVAN**

---

**FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER  
OF INDIA TO PAKISTAN**



**MR. WAJAHAT  
HABIBULLAH**

---

**FORMER CHIEF INFORMATION  
COMMISSIONER OF INDIA**



**DR. WAIEL  
AWWAD &  
MR. S. VENKAT  
NARAYAN**

**PRESIDENT EMERITUS &  
PRESIDENT, RESPECTIVELY,  
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS'  
CLUB OF SOUTH ASIA**



**MS. AKANKSHA  
KAPOOR**

**START UP INDIA & INVEST  
INDIA**







**MR. R  
SUBRAHMANYAM**

**SECRETARY (HIGHER EDUCATION),  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



**MS. POONAM  
MUTTREJA**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
POPULATION FOUNDATION OF INDIA**



INTERNATIONAL  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
NEW DELHI

## JUSTICE MADAN B. LOKUR

HON'BLE JUDGE, SUPREME COURT  
OF INDIA

INDIA

BROOKINGS

## DR. SHAMIKA RAVI

MEMBER, ECONOMIC ADVISORY  
COUNCIL TO THE PRIME MINISTER  
(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA) &  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, BROOKINGS  
INDIA

BROOKINGS



**INDIA  
TODAY**

**MR. RAJDEEP  
SARDESAI**

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**CONSULTING EDITOR,  
INDIA TODAY**



**DR. SHASHI  
THAROOR**

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**M.P. & CHAIRPERSON,  
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**





**MR. SHAKTI  
SINHA**

**DIRECTOR, NEHRU MEMORIAL  
MUSEUM & LIBRARY**



**HINDI CLASSES**

**WITH MR. SHAMMI GABRIEL**



## YOGA CLASSES WITH MR. LALIT MADAN

INSTRUCTOR, MORARJI DESAI NATIONAL  
INSTITUTE OF YOGA





# India's World in Ideation and Practice

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**WORKSHOP SERIES**

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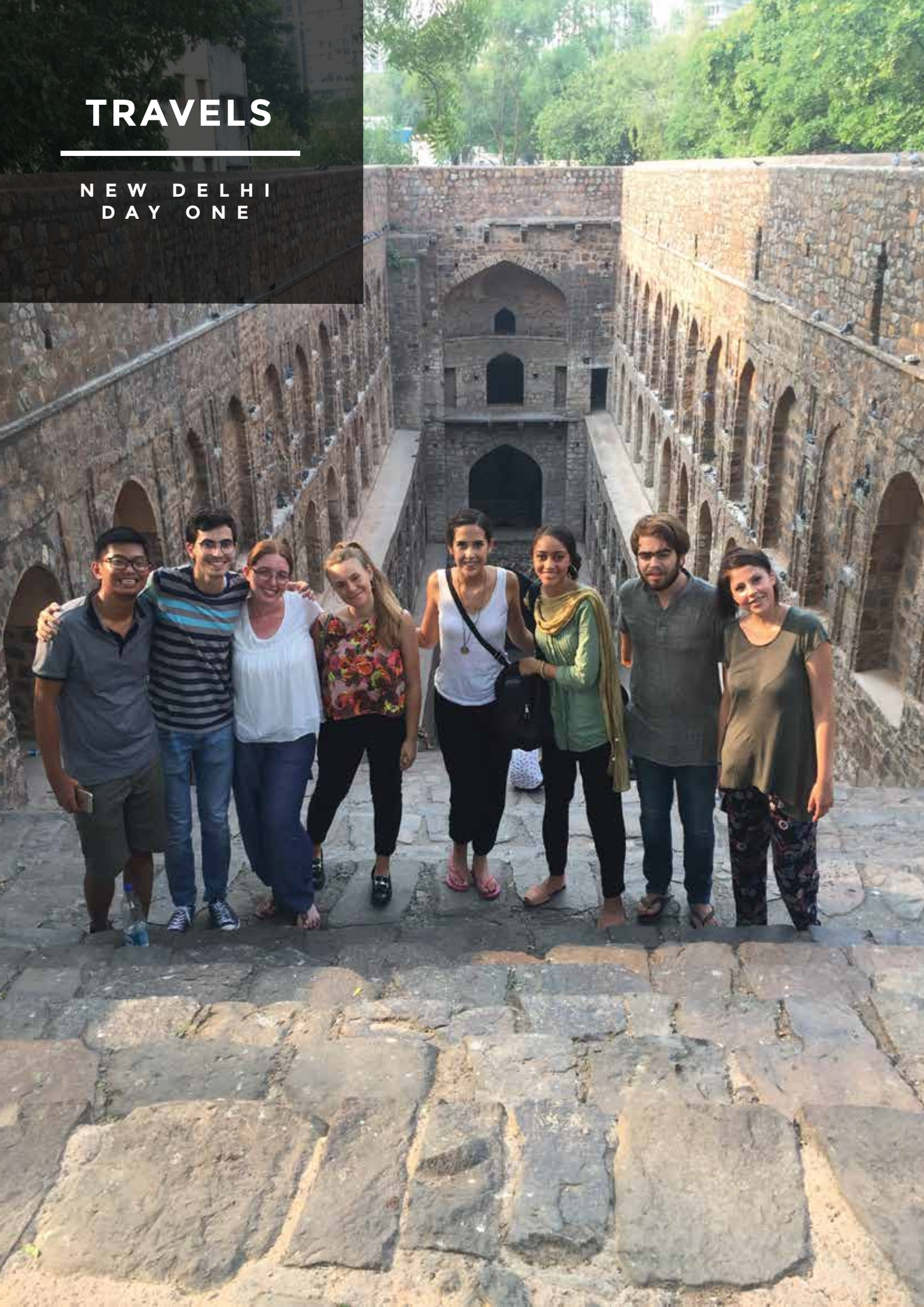
**MR. KUNAL SANDHU**

**CEO, COGITO HUB**



# TRAVELS

NEW DELHI  
DAY ONE





The day began early, yet by the time we had boarded the bus from the hostel at 8:30, it was already above 40°C! Our trip began with a visit to the iconic Red Fort. As it was still early, the site was relatively empty, and students captured a taste of the serenity and tranquillity that the residing emperors would have enjoyed as they wandered the gardens, spectated lions and elephant, or held court in their private reception rooms. Up next was Raj Ghat, the memorial to Mohandas Gandhi. Despite sitting in the middle of Delhi, the memorial is peaceful, unimposing and humble, designed to perfectly mirror the life of the man it will forever remember. Humayun's Tomb followed lunch, where we were joined by Society, Culture, and Heritage Course Co-ordinator Dr. Ruchika Sharma.

Dr. Sharma helped identify the less obvious, but equally wondrous features of the Tomb, including the influences of Mongolian interior design and Persian landscape gardening, as Humayun's was the first garden-tomb to appear on the Subcontinent. Especially enjoyable was identifying the features of the Tomb that would go on to influence Humayun's great-great-grandson Shah Jahan, including the four-fold use of Persian gardens, the central, two-roofed dome, employing water as a medium between the gate at the tomb, and the deliberate elevation of the tomb itself. We would be sure to look out for those when we visited Taj Mahal in two weeks! We finally reached the last stop of the day; the Lotus Temple, rounding off an incredible introduction to the city we were beginning to view as home.





# TRAVELS

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NEW DELHI  
DAY TWO







The day of our second Delhi tour began with a visit to the impressive structure that is the Qutub Minar, the tallest minaret in the world. The students were enchanted by its towering height and intense colours (alternating shades of red sandstone and marble), and were keen to photograph the minaret from every angle, exploring the rest of the site in the process. After a group photo shoot, we were ready for our next destination: the National Rail Museum. We were grateful for a brief respite from the Sun as we explored the air-conditioned museum, and happier still to find interactive quizzes and challenges (including plotting a train route on an interactive board)

to entertain ourselves with. Our next stop was the National Museum, an impressive site which boasted wonders including Buddhist art, pre-historical artefacts and exquisite jewellery. The last stop of the day was the impressive Akshardham Hindu Temple. Our first port of call was the temple, but before we could enter we had to remove our shoes. Simple enough, you might think, except that the Sun was beating down on the floor making it almost unbearable to touch. A quick flit to the temple was in order to reach the relief of the cool interior. After touring the inside we relaxed in the food area for some ice cream, popcorn and Gulab Jamun.

# TRAVELS

T A J   M A H A L







## Essay: *"The Immortalisation of Mumtaz Mahal"* by Samphire Cassidy (United Kingdom)

Arjumand Banu Begum was the third wife to Shah Jahan, and his most beloved. He gave her the name Mumtaz Mahal to mean "Jewel of the Palace" and bestowed upon her many wonderful gifts. It was his final gift to her that has succeeded in carving her name alongside his own into history. The Taj Mahal was commissioned in 1631 when Mumtaz died in childbirth and Shah Jahan's heart was broken. Twenty thousand workers laboured day and night to build her memorial, and it is undoubtedly the most beautiful building I have ever seen. As India's most famous heritage site, it has inspired many stories and myths and attracted millions of sightseers, but the thrill of excitement we felt had an undercurrent of uncertainty – could this single tomb live up to the name "Wonder" of the World? Built to frame the first viewing of the Taj Mahal, the Darwaza-i-rausa ("Great Gate") was a work of art in itself. Yet we barely cast it a second glance as we entered into the main courtyard and were struck speechless. The Taj Mahal was truly magnificent. I was struck by the emptiness of the skyline behind the building. It rises up to the heavens and pulls the eye in. Even the clouds seem to fade away behind it. Photographs cannot do this wonder justice; it must be witnessed. The gardens are breathtaking, and even peppered with rippling waves of tourists, there was a serenity to the

scene that cannot be fully captured in words. We wandered through the gardens, stopping briefly by the central pool to pose for photographs with the icon. The closer we approached, the more beautiful it became as the ornate Arabic inscriptions and floral designs around each gate sharpened into focus. The smooth ivory was mottled with grey, which seemed to be the only mark time had left. Even this seemed to add personality, as it gave the symmetrical sides each a character. We crossed the marble stone to look out over the Yamuna River. There is a theory that Shah Jahan was planning to build a symmetrical tomb across river in black marble. He was put under house arrest by his son before the foundations could be finished, so we can only gaze across the banks and conjure up the shadowy antithesis. It's easy to see how the monument inspires legend. There is a myth that Shah Jahan cut off the hands of the architects and builders who worked on the monument, so that they may never build something so beautiful again, but this remains a story. There is something immensely valuable about the idea that this captivating monument was inspired by love. I hope the other students shared with me a striking feeling of wonder at the magnificence of the mausoleum, and as we made our weary way home, we treasured the memories the day had brought.



## MATHURA & VRINDAVAN

ATHITHI DEVO BHAVAH

Some of the students decided to venture out of Delhi on the Sunday following our first week of lectures. A minibus was hired and sixteen students made the three-hour journey to Vrindavan, with the intention of visiting Mathura afterwards. After sleeping most of the way, we arrived and were immediately told to take off any glasses (because of the monkeys) and leave backpacks on the bus. A rickety rickshaw ride to the temple went by in a blur (and not only for those who had taken their glasses off) and we were soon at our first stop

of the day: a crowded Hindu temple. The inside of the temple was crowded and noisy, and it is fair to say that some students enjoyed this atmosphere more than others! The second group came out clutching a garland of flowers that had landed on them in the chaos. After this excitement, we took a river cruise in Mathura. The vivid pink of Vishram Ghat, a bathhouse and place of worship, stood out on the riverbank amongst the drab building of grey and brown and seemed to draw us in. One temple seemed to lead to another, and soon we were walking barefoot through the streets. Although our student-organised trip did not perhaps go as smoothly as we had hoped, our travels outside of the more comfortable areas of Delhi certainly opened our eyes to other aspects of India, and we were very glad (and exhausted!) to have taken the trip.



# ANAMIKA, JAVIER, KATIE & MATTHEW HEAD TO CHANDIGARH

## GROUP TRAVELS

A few of us decided to be spontaneous and leave Delhi for a couple of days to visit “The City Beautiful” of Chandigarh. Chandigarh is the capital of the northern Indian states of both Punjab and Haryana. The city’s influence comes from Swiss-French modernist architect Le Corbusier, who designed many of the buildings. For all of us it was our first time taking a train in India, which had its down sides, although it was much better than what we were expecting. In Chandigarh, some of the places we visited were the Rock Garden, Sukhna Lake and Elante Mall. Finding Chandigarh very Delhi different to Delhi was surprising; all the roads were straight and everything was very clean. It was a city that was making the effort to keep clean and go green. We also went shopping in Chandigarh, which took us by surprise, as we didn’t expect the prices to be lower than Delhi prices. Because of this we took the time to shop before leaving! As the city was quite small two days was enough to explore it, and we enjoyed our train journey back to Delhi together.







## SADIR & SARA FLY TO BENGALURU

TEMPLES, DOSAS &  
MORE

India has a lot to see, so choosing on a city to visit during the weekend was a very hard task: Varanasi, Mumbai, Chennai were all amazing choices, but Sara and I finally settled on the southern city of Bangalore for its weather and its amazing reputation among locals. We all want to escape the rainy and hot weather, don't we? After having a few hours of sleep, we left the hostel at around 3 am towards the airport. In the plane, Sara and I tried literally all positions to sleep: sleeping on each other's shoulders, laps, leaning

on the window, but unfortunately nothing really worked. Reaching the hotel at around 11am, we starting discovering the city. And what is better than discovering it by eating its food on a banana leaf! I can't really recall the names of dishes, but I can remember that I was so bad at eating with my hands that some strangers proposed to do this on my behalf! Then we went on to visit churches and Hindu temples, admiring the coexistence and the big influence that different religions have on each other. We also visited Cubbon Park, the High Court and the State Government House, all of which were very impressive, and pretty colourful! As we were really enjoying the greenery, we decided to go to the botanical garden, and we went there on the crowded metro! A very beautiful lake was waiting for us there, but also some weird geological formations! A nap at that point was well deserved, before



watching the world cup's final in one of Bangalore's pubs.

On our second—and last—day in Bangalore, we decided to visit Bangalore's Palace, built in 1887 by King Chamaraja Wadiyar and Tudor-inspired. Here, we met three students from Chennai's University, who recommended to us the best sites to visit in Bangalore and the best places to eat Masala Dosa, typical South Indian food. After saying goodbye to our new friends, we went for lunch and we had grilled vegetables, chicken and shrimps (and even watermelon because why not). In the afternoon, we walked around the city and fell in love with it. Our favourite place was what we called 'the happy street', where everyone was smiling, waving at us and just enjoying their time. There we also saw two women,

beautifully dressed, who were lying on the floor playing a weird board game with shells: Sadir said that it reminded him of home, where a similar game is called Barjis. After taking for the first time a pre-booked rickshaw and doing some shopping, we went to our final destination: the ISKCON temple. Here, we took part in a ceremony but, at the end, I mistakenly drank the coconut oil I was given in the temple to put on my hair. Finally, we enjoyed the sunset with a beautiful view of the city and went back to the airport. Even if only for a weekend, it was amazing to experience a new city so different from Delhi. Known as the Silicon Valley of India, maintaining its traditions but looking to the future, Bangalore gave us a new perspective on India and its process of development.





# **SAMPHIRE & JOSHUA'S SOHNA SAGA**

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**LAKES, SATELLITES &  
NATURAL SPRINGS**

When we told the Indians on the program we planned to visit Sohna, a confused ‘why?’ or a concerned ‘are you sure?’ were never too far from a raised eyebrow or two. Of course, Sohna had none of the cultural significance of Vrindavan and Mathura, or the beauty of Chandigarh; it offered a very different kind of experience. Firstly, Sohna sits precariously as a satellite town of New Delhi, fractionally beyond the cusp of engulfment into Gurugram, so we were fascinated to explore the sprawling, ravenous growth of the nation’s burgeoning capital from the outside. Hiking in the nearby hills, we felt like time had stopped for this town in transition: the old town, a small settlement of low rise houses and curling, labyrinth streets, appeared frozen in time in the face of looming sets of towers gradually encroaching on the skyline. Surrounded on three sides by hills, looking down on Sohna from above was like watching urban sprawl in slow motion, where Delhi’s insatiable expansion had just started seeping into these small satellite

towns. Skyscrapers, hunting in three packs of five, slipped through the hills and onto the horizon like water through the cracks in a dam. Every time we looked away, it seemed like Delhi, and its towering harbingers, took one step closer, as if the only thing preventing the skyscrapers finally reaching Sohna was our immediate gaze. Within the town, life remained ignorant of the imminent, inevitable changes that would irrevocably transform the town. We visited Shiva Kund, a 500 year-old temple that still functions as set of popular public baths, extracting naturally warm water from 55ft below ground to fill its main Kund. This was followed by a trip to Lake Damdama, further into Sohna’s still rural surroundings, which we were lucky enough to see in its transitory state between dry bed and full body of water. The monsoon had only just begun, and the lake appeared to us in a liminal state: shallow enough to host an entire congregation of wild animals, yet just deep enough to support an emergent fleet of row-boats and pedaloes from newly established, nearby resorts. Everywhere here, a rural, traditional past struck temporary equilibrium with incoming development, and we left Sohna with a strong sense that we had visited not just a town, but the still eye of a sprawling urban storm.



# FAREWELL

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To commemorate the conclusion of 2018 academic session, the ISS hosted a formal celebration of completion alongside a farewell to those departing before the beginning of the Service Learning Component of the course. Held at the prestigious India International Centre, the event was honoured by the presence of a wide variety of dignitaries and distinguished guests. This included representatives from the Diplomatic Missions of the Australia, Bhutan, Chile, Georgia, Italy, United States, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Additional distinguished guests including PFI Executive Director Ms. Poonam Muttreja, former Australian Diplomat and Politician Ambassador Richard Butler, Deputy Director of the UNFPA Dr. Jennifer Butler, Mr. Kunal Sandhu and the CogitoHub team, Course Co-ordinator Dr. Ruchika Sharma,

Bahá'í Faith leader Mr. Shaheen Javid, United States-India Educational Foundation Deputy Director Dr. Diya Dutt, and senior journalist Ms. Suhasini Haidar.

The evening was a fabulous celebration of the success of the ISS's goals and values over the past four weeks. Not only was the night designed to showcase the fantastic academic achievements of all students, it embodied the pivotal role of student-led cultural exchange in the realisation of the ISS's goals.

Students were encouraged to attend the event in the formal dress of their own country, or to try out the experience of traditional Indian dress themselves. As a result, we enjoyed a display of suits and





dressess alongside the traditional wear of Nepal, Bhutan, Paraguay, and Mexico, followed by a plethora of Saris and Kurtas. It's fair to say some of our students definitely pulled them off!

After the awards ceremony, during which we heard speeches from ISS Director Mr. Amjad Ali Khan, and two students, Sadir Abdul Hadi from Lebanon and Agustina Bozzano from Paraguay (extracts from their speech can be found below), the students enjoyed a fantastic opportunity to interact with both each other and our distinguished guests. One highlight of these interactions was to observe students interacting with representatives from embassies without students on this year's program, such as Nigeria and Georgia, a perfect representation of the ISS's hope that students can come together and find unity through a genuine interest in the diversity and plurality of any given situation. Another was noticing how those students represented by someone from their embassy were keen to introduce students from other countries to their representative, again an embodiment of their desire to spread cultural understanding and integration well beyond what may be expected.

“

*It might be the last day for some of us in India, but definitely not the last day for India in us. But this summer school is not all about India, it's also about the 20 countries represented in it. It was so inspiring to watch discussions between a Pakistani and an Indian, among many others. It was just as if we were sewing a new Silk Road...*

*“...Perhaps a very fragile one that only exists in the classroom, but definitely a much needed one. This new Silk Road links Paraguay to the UK, passing by the Caribbean, North America, South-East Asia, the subcontinent, the Middle East, and Mainland Europe...Understanding India means understanding the world, and I think we're all now a step closer.*

”

**- Agustina Bozzano and Sadir Abdul Hadi**

As the evening concluded, it became clear that beyond its fostering of exceptional cross-cultural diplomatic ties and the promotion of academic excellence, the ISS forges life-long friendships. With many students set to leave India for their home countries the next day, there were plenty of opportunities for photos together, all of which showed that this was not a 'goodbye' at all: it was an emphatic 'see you soon!' to all those leaving us.







## Essay: *"Polyphony in Delhi"*

by Nora Seebach (Switzerland)

When it comes to describing you, Delhi, all I can think of are impressions, feelings, flashing faces, places, dimensions and smells. No vocabulary in any language could capture that or the sentiment I get after having shyly scratched the surface of your essence, Delhi. I only have a hint of a hunch of an idea of what could be out there in this city, in this region, in this country and these cultures. Polyphony and bottomlessness. We will never hear one melody and never reach the bottom of it. The contrasts are impossible to link linguistically, despite or because these contrasts are so intertwined here in Delhi. The contrasts are in a perfectly chaotic and at the same time tailored symbiosis with each other. Death, despair and illness are in conversation with beauty, colossal

architecture, decadence, power and world politics. I see your wide, empty streets only interrupted by impressive roundabouts with manicured grass-patches, flowers and fountains. When I follow these streets long enough, before I even get the chance to take in what is in front of me, international embassies are suddenly replaced with narrow streets.

Openings the size of a window that functions as all-purpose shops pop up. These you only reach by foot. The wide streets have vanished. Deserted cleanliness and brimming bustle. Sterile gardens and the smell of poverty. All simultaneously, all parallel, all Delhi. Intricate Streets with marble floor lead to a Sufi altar. The altar encircled by

begging children and sick humans with hope in their eyes. Proud geriatrics walk around the altar in prayer and the women try to sneak a look inside, their hands lifted for prayer as well. At the same time, as the sun sets, at a place where the Sufi chants have vanished in the noise of the traffic long ago, statesmen in suits meet for high-tea and leave the colonial building in limousines. A group of young educated Indians celebrate the birthday of one of theirs and cut a piece of cake on a glass- table in a gated community. A family of Sikhs is on their way home for dinner after having shown their devotion under the bright and awe- inspiring chandelier in the temple. The woman is uncovering her head and the man is releasing his beard. Everything is always happening all the time here in your city, Delhi. A fire is always burning somewhere.





# SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

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FINAL TWO WEEKS







# WWF-INDIA

## BHARATPUR

The ISS's new relationship with WWF-India is a pioneering aspect of the 2018 session. WWF-India's mission statement can be summarised as a drive "to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by: conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. In its mission to take forward the agenda of environmental protection, WWF-India works with varied groups of individuals and institutions across different sections of ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. In its mission to take forward the agenda of environmental protection, WWF-India works with varied groups of individuals and institutions across different sections of society. These alliances strive to address the common goal of conserving biodiversity, sustainably using natural resources and maintaining ecosystems and ecosystem services for the survival of wildlife and people depending on them."

Specifically for the ISS, this new partnership focused on conservation work at Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur, Rajasthan. A UNESCO World Heritage site, KNP has the richest biodiversity of all Indian national parks; its wetlands support more than 100 species of non-migratory resident birds whilst serving as India's major wintering ground for more than 250 species of Palaearctic migratory waterfowl.

Amongst its huge range of birds, which inspired "the birdman of India", Dr. Salim Ali, the park boasts the world's highest-flying bird, the Bar-headed Goose, and the world's tallest flying bird, the Saras Crane. Alongside its social sustainability program, the Park will work with the ISS on issues including the security of water sources to the park, tackling pollution and environmental degradation, and the conservation of fresh drinking water in local communities.

Our bus journey to Bharatpur was long, but we were rewarded upon arrival at our beautiful Sunbird Hotel with a delicious buffet meal. The hotel's gardens were teeming with frogs, crickets, lizards and even some timid kittens, and the rooms were beautifully decorated. Our basecamp was set for the week, and we were very pleased with it. After breakfast the following morning, we made our first visit to the park. Driving past rickshaw pullers, marshes and birds gave us a tantalising taste of what our week was



to entail. We were introduced to the WWF staff and given a presentation on the history, ecology and politics of the Keoladeo National Park.

After lunch we returned to the park to partake in a water testing session. Our guides showed us how to measure the pH level and levels of oxygen in the river – our students were keen to dive into the work and collect the water samples themselves. The demonstration revealed that the water in that area of the park was normal, and the importance of constant monitoring was highlighted to make sure the same levels could be maintained all year around. What followed was perhaps the highlight of our time in Bharatpur – a bike/rickshaw tour of the park. Those students who were feeling energetic enough rented bikes to explore the park, while other students paired up and were given a rickshaw tour. The bikes were wonderfully liberating for those who used them, but the rickshaws had the added bonus of a tour-guide who was able to point out birds along the way and say their names in up to three languages. Doves, owls and peacocks were just some of the birds spotted, as well as deer, cows, turtles and lizards. Our second full day in Bharatpur began with a visit to a reservoir, which was accompanied by an explanation of the various water sources available to the park. We then met and interviewed the rickshaw pullers, which was particularly enlightening for the group tasked with social issues relevant to the park. We learnt that the rickshaw pullers struggle economically because the park's tourist population is wildly inconsistent depending on the time of year. The rest of the day was given over to seeing Bharatpur's most impressive sights, before retiring to the hotel for dinner and a nature documentary featuring the park. The following morning was possibly the liveliest, as we visited a school nearby that would soon be taking part in the WWF Schools Programme. We divided into groups to talk to individual classes (with our Hindi speaking students acting as translators)







about their lives, education and their relationship with water. The students welcomed us with 'teeka' (powdered paint) for our foreheads and flower petals as well as a cloth bracelet. They were quite clearly excited to have visitors and were keen to ask us about our lives. After numerous selfies the rain forced us back to the bus and hotel (an interaction with a village was sadly cancelled due to the mud) and we worked for the rest of the afternoon on our presentations.

The projects proved to be challenging, as it was unsurprisingly difficult to find solutions to problems that WWF had yet to solve themselves. Our presentations on the final morning were rigorously challenged and we had to work hard on the spot to defend our proposals. Having completed our assignments, we returned

to the hotel for a well-deserved lunch. Late afternoon was given over to a trip to Bharatpur Fort, in which we visited the beautiful museum, only to spend most of our time taking in the rooftop views and taking photographs! The views of Bharatpur were impressive, and our attention was caught particularly by peacocks that had somehow managed to get on top of a roof, as well as a building that was located in the middle of a road (which came first, we wondered, the building or the road?). Our final meal in Bharatpur was tinged with sadness, as we had so enjoyed our time at Keoladeo National Park and at our beautiful hotel. Some students decided to make use of the conference room after dinner to watch a Bollywood film, a first for many of us. The following morning we packed up and got on the bus ready for our next adventure... Jaipur!





# TRAVEL EXCURSION

## JAIPUR

After leaving Bharatpur in the morning, we arrived at our hotel in Jaipur for a late lunch. Our first trip in Jaipur was to the bazaar. We bargained hard when buying clothes, and those who know how to sew even bought material! The bustling atmosphere was infectious, and everyone enjoyed peering into the shops along the way (although the merchants forward manner was not always appreciated!). The first stop of the following day was at the iconic Hawa Mahal, where we disembarked briefly for an unmissable photo opportunity. We then got back on the bus to go to the day's main attraction: Amer Fort. The bus stopped at another prime photo spot and we enjoyed taking long-distance photos of the impressive fort and sneaking a peek at a snake charmer. We then got into jeeps for the remainder of the journey to the fort itself, a refreshing mode of transportation. We then proceeded to get lost in the maze that was the Amer Fort, a stunning labyrinth of corridors, staircases and courtyards. In the evening we went to a "village- amusement

-park" partnership focused on conservation called Choki Dhani. The most memorable part of the evening was probably when a wrestler lifted one of our students over his shoulders – and then the student returned the favour! Dinner was an interesting affair – we ate a traditional Thali where nothing was optional. The waiters were very, exuberant, shall we say, and would ignore any request that a certain part of the meal not be served. Leading to mixed results, the dessert (perfect Jalebi), more than compensated. A quick wander around outside after dinner made it clear to us that after sunset was the best time to visit Choki Dhani, whose shabbiness was hidden by the darkness and whose best parts (traditional dancers, fire eaters) were perfectly lit by the hundreds of beautiful lanterns adorning every gate and attraction. The following day was our last in Jaipur, and we spent most of it milling around the stunning city palace. This stunning complex of courtyards and gardens used to be the seat of the Maharaja of Jaipur, and today mostly houses an impressive museum. The city palace was the perfect way to finish our whirlwind trip to the Pink City, an unforgettable experience overall.



# RITINJALI

DELHI/NCR

The ISS continues its strong working relationship with Ritinjali, a charity that works for education, opportunity, and learning as a means to awareness, so that learning may lead to access to a better life. Its mission is to provide holistic education towards nurturing empowered, responsible citizens, capable of not only providing for themselves, but also of contributing actively to their local communities through enterprise, awareness and self-induced social responsibility. Ritinjali strongly believes that education is the most powerful engine of social change enhancing the opportunities open to each individual. Over the last twenty years, Ritinjali has been working through a variety of initiatives and with varied community

groups in many educational and development related endeavors. While based in Delhi, Ritinjali's efforts have reached areas as far-flung as Rajasthan, Tripura, Meghalaya, Gujarat, Orissa, Karaikal, Kargil, Leh, Bihar and Uttaranchal. Its work with the government schools of Delhi and Rajasthan complements its mission of providing quality education to all through the rejuvenation of the government schooling system. As far as universal literacy is concerned, Ritinjali is providing holistic education to the marginalized children in three slum clusters in the National Capital Region.

Ritinjali's Second Chance School in Mahipalpur, New Delhi - a school for urban deprived young adults who did not get their first chance, providing vocational training, apprenticeship and entrepreneurship development programs



as well as schooling through the National Open School system - is an attempt to mainstream the alienated youth in our society.

The Service Learning component of the course concluded with four days of volunteering with Ritinjali, a charity which works with marginalised groups, including those living in slums, those stricken by poverty, victims of violence and natural disaster, offering assistance through educational and developmental endeavours. Having enjoyed successful collaborations with Ritinjali during previous sessions, this year's cooperation took place across four centres in Delhi for the first time:

**Sector 62, Gurgaon:** Collaboration with Pioneer Urban & Land Infrastructure Ltd. for the migrant labour population living adjacent to the buildings; mainly for children aged 3-15.

**Nathupur Pahari Centre, Gurgaon:** Slum inhabited by migrants from eastern parts of India looking for work in Delhi; mainly children 4-12.

**Mahipalpur:** Ritinjali's headquarters and centre for adult learning; students aged 18-40.

**Kusumpur Pahari:** a slum inhabited by migrant families from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, many of whom worked to construct Jawaharlal Nehru University. Mainly students aged 3-15.





Over the course of the first three days, students engaged in hands on volunteering directly with their respective Ritinjali centre. Initially this involved ISS students getting to know the teachers and students, familiarising themselves with their school and its needs, and establishing whether there were any specific projects the teachers would like completed during our time with them. This included running vocabulary sessions, designing and creating displays based on Ritinjali's syllabus, which focused on bugs this week, or playing English-themed games. After the introductions of day one, students were tasked with creating a two-day plan for their work in their respective schools, designed to accommodate the discussion of needs students had with teachers alongside their own original content based on ISS values of cultural exchange.

At the Nathupur Pahari Centre, the children tended to be younger than the other two schools for children, so ISS students tended to focus on more basic skills such as learning numeracy and the English alphabet. Additionally, ISS students helped with the drawing and colouring of bugs for a display, along with leading a session on the monsoons

that had begun last month. The week was packed with fun too, with ISS students teaching rhymes and songs, playing games and learning Hindi from the children themselves. Students at Kusumpur Pahari were also with very young students, and spent a lively time with them singing along to Mexican songs, playing with a skipping rope and drawing pictures. The students were totally engaged and absolutely delighted with to be taking part in such fun and lively activities.

Mahipalpur was unique compared to the other three centres as it mainly focused on the education of young adults. This meant some of the students could speak English too, so as an ice-breaker, ISS students taught some basic Spanish! Again tailored to this unique student group, the ISS-led side of the program included presentations on the important social issues that face young adults, such as gender roles and stereotypes, human and civil rights, and personal and community hygiene. Again, on the last day there was plenty of opportunity for cultural exchange, with one ISS student playing Western music on a guitar, whilst Ritinjali's students danced and sang traditional Indian songs for us! In Sector 62, ISS students began by





assisting with basic vocabulary classes, before running their own classes on bug, using games such as Pictionary to teach too. Students went on to create a new display for the school, again on the types of bugs you and those one must be aware of, such as mosquitoes and bedbugs. On day three, where the ISS was allowed to set the syllabus, students helped the children create bug-masks, which were used as part of a “bug-theatre” production, where students had learned their own insect in English before interacting with other “bugs”.

This aspect of the ISS program was undoubtedly the most emotionally difficult, with Ritinjali’s fantastic staff offering a full range of support to students understandably finding the poverty and serious deprivation faced by the children in Ritinjali’s centres difficult to deal with. However, it was also unquestionably the most uplifting, rewarding and inspiring section of the program. All students agreed that the opportunity to learn about another side of Delhi, whilst making a genuine,

meaningful and worthwhile contribution to a group of children so much less fortunate than themselves, was a shining example of the value of service learning. Helping teach English, designing and creating displays, and offering any other services that Ritinjali’s teachers requested, all represented the capacity of human beings to help and treat each other with respect regardless of age or background. Cultural exchange, a theme that transcends the ISS’s philosophy and a vital tool in our campaign to spread international understanding and co-operation amongst young leaders, showed itself to be a powerful catalyst for direct social change too. Interacting with Ritinjali’s students, including Indian games and songs, had a profound impact on all students as we came to appreciate that there are no barriers that can resist the values of respect, empathy and unity.



# STUDENT

## PROFILES





# AGUSTINA MARIA BOZZANO REZANO PARAGUAY



SMITH COLLEGE, USA

I came to India with a yearning to understand its people and its culture, yet what I learned is significantly different from what I expected. Through the ISS program, I understood that as an outsider it is difficult to change my lenses and perspectives in a way that could allow me to see reality from a different cultural angle. While learning about India's history, politics, society, economy, and culture, not only through lectures but also through day-to-day interactions and the service-learning component, I realized that my own culture and socialization signify a whole range of behaviors and ideas that are no more than simple outputs of social conditioning. This became clearer when addressing questions about gender, caste, and class in India. Being able to see what different social norms look like in this nation made me realize that the environment we grow up in is key for developing such important things as our moral identity and principles. This means, I came to learn, that there is no one person or nation with the authority to tell us what is right or wrong, how we should live and how we should not, these questions may only find answers through cultural humility and the will to merge our different views with tolerance and mutual acceptance so that we can better address the issues in our societies. I am endlessly grateful for the opportunity I had to participate in this program. What I learned has awakened new interests that I know will be key for not only my future as a professional but also as a person.



# ALIA SKY MORGAN REYNOLDS USA



UC SANTA BARBARA, USA

There is absolutely no way to sum up my time in India in 250 words. So instead of providing you a summary of my experiences here, as I am sure most of the other student profiles you read will do for you, I will attempt, instead, to tell you how this program has fundamentally altered me and changed the path my life will take. Before arriving in India I knew only that I had an intense interest in the culture of this country, however, I could not have guessed I would come to feel more at home here than I have ever felt in the country I was born and raised, the United States. The individuals who I met here, ranging from people who I met at 1am on the rooftop of the hostel to Shashi Tharoor himself, made me realize the exact path I want to take in life and how I want to get there. The people of this incredible country welcomed me with such open arms and such full hearts, no matter the fact that I did not look, speak or act anything like the 'norm' that I realized there is no possible way I can not come back to this country to live, to work and to thrive. Speaking of 'norm', I know I just used the term, but it would be highly inappropriate of me not to explain that there truly is no 'norm' here. This is a country of diversity marked by the uniqueness found in every single individual you will meet. A few months is not nearly enough, a few years, a few decades may not even be enough- it would take centuries to begin to understand the complexities of this country.







**ANABEL LEINES  
CASTELAN  
MEXICO**



**AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY  
OF HIDALGO, MEXICO**

# ANAMIKA PRADHAN BHUTAN



SHERUBTSE COLLEGE,  
BHUTAN

I feel blessed and privileged to have been able to take part in the International Summer School for the year 2018 and grateful for having had this opportunity to experience new things and meet amazing people from all over the world. Since India is a neighbouring country to Bhutan, I had some knowledge about the culture and traditions, but what I learnt in my four week programme not only gave me the clear concepts but was also an eye opener for me and I am very excited to share all the knowledge and experiences I gained with my fellow mates here. This course not only taught me about India but also about 18 other different countries in the world. It taught me the values of oneness like how we are all the same despite following different religions, customs, traditions, languages and belonging to completely different regions. I cannot say I had any best moments in my four weeks stay because all of them were amazing moments to be cherished now. I really enjoyed going on trips, the best one was our trip to Mathura and visiting all the historical places and meeting with the great Indian figures. I can confidently say that this course was one of the best academic courses for young minds to experience personal growth and development. The excellent communication skills of the officials to keep me informed about the scholarship and going an extra mile to help me made me feel the care and concern they had for us. Now that it has come to an end, bidding farewell to the



most lively and cooperative people is hard but it also gives us the opportunity to visit them in future and explore more. Thank you ISS. TASHI DELEK!





**ANDREA ELIZABETH  
FUENTES MONROY  
MEXICO**



**INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO  
DE SALTILLO**

The day I submitted the application, I only hoped that the next day I would have an answer. When the day arrived, I just felt so happy because I was in the next stage. While I was in the process, I was very glad about what was going to come. In the last stage when I finally received the email, my body and mind were disconnected for a moment, it was great. From that day I had to undertake the way of being able to complete the expenses, it was two months of hard work, in which I did not give up. Many people told me why I had chosen India to study at summer, but it was only in my mind that it remained one of the best decisions of my life. When I arrived to New Delhi, I was convinced that I was right, because once you are in

India you start an incredible adventure that you will never be able to forget. The diversity of cultures, languages and religions become a surprise in every sense. In addition, I am very happy to have been one of the 5 Mexicans within the course. ISS include a strong multicultural diversity in their student body, so thank you so much for this chance for my country; I really had a good time and have had many kinds of experiences. ISS shows you during 48 days how to understand India, from its history, the way in which society coexists, and the current challenges it has. I definitely recommend the course to get to know India, and what are you capable of doing by yourself.

# AREEBA HASAN

## INDIA



LADY SRI RAM COLLEGE,  
INDIA

Having studied Indian society, economy, history and politics throughout my student life, I didn't think I could get a new perspective on things I had learnt previously. ISS changed that for me and proved to be a great learning experience. In addition to the professors who gave us new perspectives on things they taught, each student provided a fresh point of view from the culture and country they represented. Over the 4 weeks I spent with the students of ISS, I developed a deeper sense of appreciation for my country and city, having seen it from a new viewpoint. I am extremely grateful to have met so many wonderful people (professors, guest lecturers, and students) and am glad to be taking away what each of them taught me during the last month!





# CASSANDRA GIBBONS UK



OXFORD UNIVERSITY, UK

Having studied Indian society, economy, My experience with the International Summer School New Delhi has been incredible. When I signed up – in a joint intern-student capacity – I was expecting to go to some interesting lectures, meet lots of new people and see the Taj Mahal. What I wasn't expecting was a monkey (temporarily) stealing my glasses, learning how to haggle effectively in markets and meeting famous journalists. My expectations of what this experience was going to be now look hopelessly naïve. Learning about India from some of its best lecturers was simply the opportunity of a lifetime, and one I'm so glad I took. But the highlight for me was most definitely getting to explore the country with a group of students who made the experience truly special.





## **DARREN SCOTT EDWARDS AUSTRALIA**



**UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE,  
AUSTRALIA**

I first heard of this program through the faculty at my University and right away I knew that I wanted to attend. The team at ISS were helpful throughout the entire enrolment process, during my stay in India and right through until I left to come home. The ISS experience has enriched my understanding on India's political, spiritual and cultural heritage, not to mention the forming of new and long-lasting friendships from likeminded students all over the world. Learning about India during the course was not just lecture based, as knowledge also came from the many interactions with

India's people both in an educational setting and during my downtime while exploring the sights and sounds of Delhi and Agra.

This experience will forever be in my heart and one that I will be talking about for a very long time. My only regret is that I did not stay for the extra 2-week field work experience due to commitments back in my home country, however, I will most definitely be returning to India to explore this amazing country again and again in the coming years.

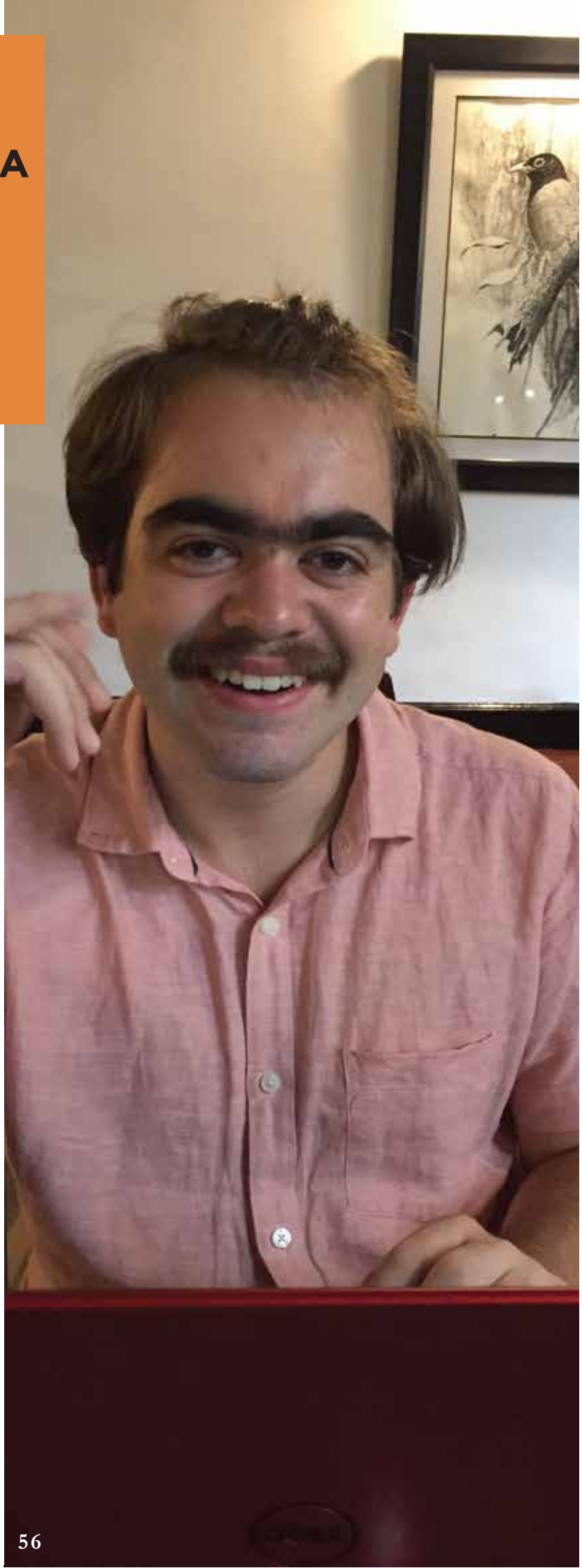


# DIEGO ARTURO JIMÉNEZ PADILLA MEXICO



ITESO, MEXICO

I experienced one of the most amazing summers of my life here in ISS New Delhi! I knew nothing about this country before coming and I still feel like I lacked a lot of time to really get to understand India better. I'm glad to say that the program enlightened me to see a broader view of how plurality exists and matters. I met a lot of amazing people that helped me understand that differences are key in how we live and how we want to live. I will talk wonders about India and I will joyfully be back soon!



# DIVYA SRIVASTAVA INDIA



DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL,  
INDIA

As a recent school graduate, my knowledge of the immense diversity and culture of India was only limited to my knowledge from textbooks. The lectures and seminars helped enhance my understanding of our continuously evolving yet historical identity. Coming from a science background, the lectures which focused mainly on the social structure of Indian society gave me a new outlook on the way I see things and introduced me to a new way of looking at things. I thoroughly enjoyed the trips around Delhi and to the Taj Mahal which were educational and at the same time great fun. I also got the chance to meet amazing people from all over the world and made some truly great friends and memories which I will cherish.





# HIRA HASHMI

## PAKISTAN



SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY,  
INDIA

The best thing I found here in India is the heterogeneity that Indian society holds. Even if you are in a class room of twenty students you may expect you are sitting with at least seven different mother tongues, diverse traditions and cultures, and people with altogether different food habits. The unique feature is that, despite of all these differences, the state has worked marvelously in holding the nation together and moving it forward. It is only in India that you will find temple, mosque and Gurudwara visited by not only with the followers of their respective religion but open to all, regardless of religion or any other qualification. I am blessed to have learned about many aspects of India, thanks a bunch ISS, it was a great honour for me to be a part of this program.



# JAVIER ENRIQUE SOSA OLIVERA MEXICO



INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO  
SUPERIOR DE CIUDAD  
CONSTITUCIÓN, MEXICO

Since I was a little kid I always wanted to travel to this country, now I feel so lucky and blessed to have been a part of ISS 2018 and I will always be thankful to receive this opportunity. This trip and all the experiences I had in India have changed all the ways I look at life, at the world, at people, and even at myself. I would like to say that this is the greatest experience that I have had. I will not be able to forget the strong bonds and friendships I made with the people that studied and explored alongside me all the time.

Finally I want to give thanks to the all the ISS staff for everything they have done for us. Without any doubt, the best part for me and the one that taught me some of the biggest life lesson was the service-learning week working with children. Their innocence, energy, and the way to live their lives to the fullest completely broadened my horizons and taught me to always be grateful for what I have.





# JAY BAHADUR SHAH NEPAL



**SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY,  
INDIA**

The International Summer School has been a wonderful platform to not only know, but to feel India. I think India is increasingly being successful in achieving its motto of learning-cum-tourism. The lectures were of class and quality, which opened my eyes and broadened my mind about India and its foundations. Tours and visits were like catalysts and useful spice in the food to mirror those lectures. Interactions with highly experienced and visionary personalities, with whom we could converse, were of special interest to me. ISS is second to none in its understanding of international relations and of doing diplomacy. I was with wonderful people of insightful psyche who seemed quite reserved in the beginning but snow-balled later once we started chatting each other. Not only one, but five of the seven continents were represented in ISS and I would love to call it as a “Mini-Universe”. I can now speak a little bit of Spanish, French, Persian, Urdu, and Hindi, which I would not have thought possible had I not met these unforgettable friends. The student presentations about their respective countries were another part of programme that struck me profoundly, and I wish the ISS keep this up and running. Finally, I now can confidently raise my hand if somebody asks me about India and the world in general.





## JOSHUA CLEARY

### UK



OXFORD UNIVERSITY, UK

The ISS has undoubtedly been one of the most rewarding and enriching experiences of my life. Having the chance to meet such an incredible group of people, including students, lecturers, ISS staff, and everyone that we were lucky enough to interact with during the Service Learning Component of the course, was an opportunity I am so lucky to have received. Academically, I found the ISS's course fascinating. The lecture series, which spanned topics as varied as economic development, culture, and politics, was delivered by some of India's leading academics. Alongside the exceptional quality of debate found in all lectures, the use of India as the central case study for questions on democracy, growth, and multiculturalism, allowed me to approach issues I study as part of my own degree with fresh and enlightening perspectives. Undoubtedly, the diversity that constitutes the ISS's student body is its greatest strength; having the chance to interact academically with students from 17 other countries allowed me to add another layer of perception to my engagements with India. After lectures, I

I always looked forward to hearing how students from Mexico, Bhutan or Switzerland had engaged with the Indian perspectives of the lecture, through which we all came to realise that 'normality' is a truly relative concept. I am certain that I have learnt just as much outside the classroom as within it. As part of the amazing range of special interactions organised, I had the chance to engage with leading politicians and journalists, visit some of Asia's leading think tanks, and tour one of India's leading media outlets. Supplementing the insights of these industry leaders with the perspectives of rickshaw-pullers I met when volunteering with WWF-India, or with teachers and students at my Ritinjali centre, allowed me to engage with some of the major issues facing India with an enhanced appreciation of all stakeholders who must be recognised, heard and included. India is a land of contradictions, with blinding poverty alongside fabulous growth, ancient heritage enhancing a pioneering modernity, and immeasurable diversity informing an essential unity. I am incredibly grateful to the ISS for combining exceptional teaching, historic tours, multi-faceted service learning, and a fantastically diverse group of young people, all of which have allowed me a brief glimpse into the fascinating contradictions that define India today.



# LUXMI KATIE GOPEE MAURITIUS



**BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY,  
UK**

Having studied Indian society, economy, history and politics throughout my student life, I didn't think I could get a new perspective on things I had learnt previously. ISS changed that for me and proved to be a great learning experience. In addition to the professors who gave us new perspectives on things they taught, each student provided a fresh point of view from the culture and country they represented. Over the 4 weeks I spent with the students of ISS, I developed a deeper sense of appreciation for my country and city, having seen it from a new viewpoint. I am extremely grateful to have met so many wonderful people (professors, guest lecturers, and students) and am glad to be taking away what each of them taught me during the last month!

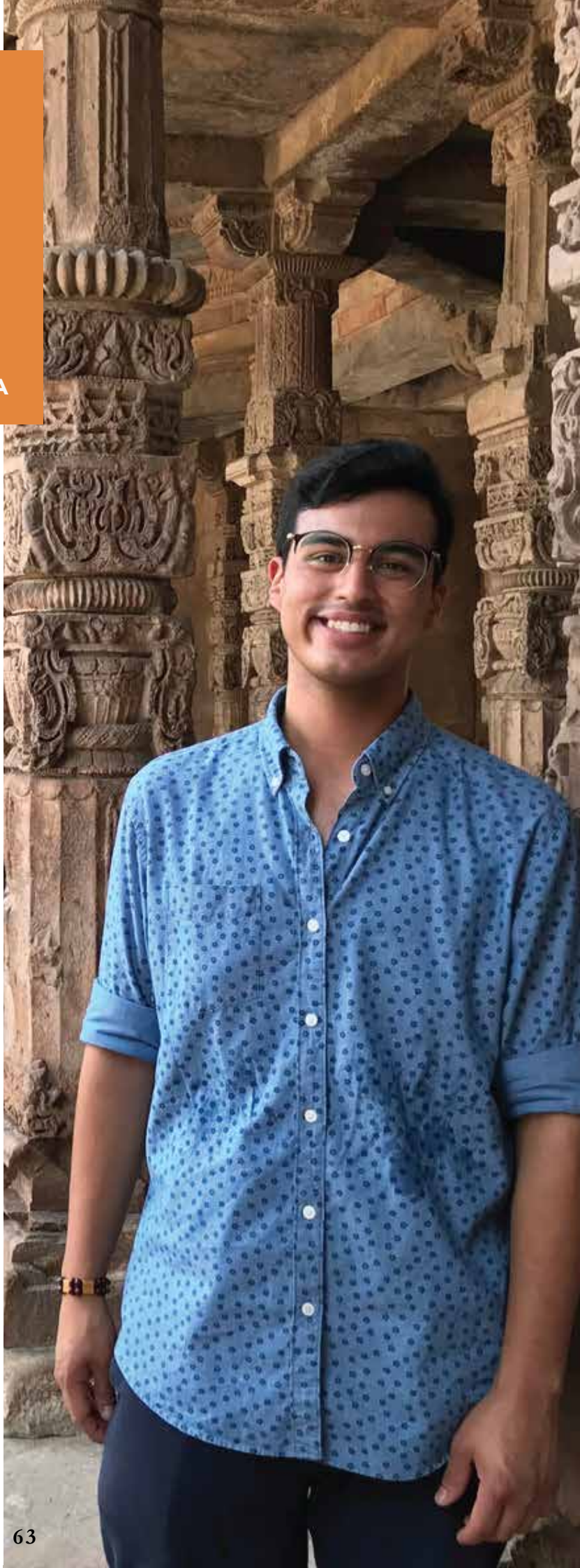


# MATTHEW HERNANDEZ USA



UC SANTA BARBARA, USA

While I was willing and eager to learn from India, I must say I wasn't particularly prepared to be transformed by it. The Indian people have shown me the true meaning of humility, simplicity, and joie de vivre. In doing so, they have radically changed my outlook on life itself. Among the experiences I found most rewarding, four of us were tasked to work with young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two at Ritinjali's Second Chance School in Mahipalpur. By our third day together, I was so grateful for the opportunity to interact with these students, to hear about their hopes and aspirations, and to have been welcomed so warmly by people who didn't even speak the same language as me. My greatest joy came when, after I played a few sloppy covers on acoustic guitar for them, several students shared their music-cultures with us by bursting into some of the liveliest dancing I've ever seen (I have to confess, I was smiling for so long that my face nearly went numb.) Even though our languages and cultures differed significantly, I will never forget how, if at least for that brief moment, we were all united in common celebration through song and dance. This experience, among many others that I have lived in India, has taught me to treasure the simple pleasures of life, not to over-complicate things as I usually do, and to enjoy the moment before it's gone. Looking back on the astonishing six weeks I was fortunate enough to spend here, I can't help but agree unequivocally with the phrase "Incredible India!"







# MAYA MEHR HAIDAR INDIA



ASHOKA UNIVERSITY,  
INDIA

Looking around the seminar room of the historic Teen Murti Bhavan, home to India's first Prime Minister and current location of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, I saw before me students from more than a dozen nationalities. Every day, we engaged in spirited and thoughtful discussions on the infinite parts of Indian culture, diversity and politics. Through ISS 2018, I have been able to gain incredible insight into my own country and all its colours. At first, our consortium of global citizens reminded me a lot of the United Nations, wherein each member's point of view seemed to represent that of their respective countries. It was only later that I realised the importance of viewing features of my country with their fresh perspectives. It was through our lectures, taught by professors from some of the best universities in India, that I learned to question these very characteristics that I took for granted and evaluate their implications from an academic standpoint. Moreover, ISS introduced us to individuals from the highest echelons of power who gave us a unique behind-the-

scenes view of how public policy in India is made and implemented. But perhaps my greatest education took place outside the classroom, where I actually got to apply the knowledge from inside to the India that I live in. Whether it was spending the evening at the Nizamuddin dargah or a day trip to the Taj Mahal or forming relationships with truly intelligent and fascinating people from all walks of life, my summer at ISS is an experience I would not exchange for the world. Thank you to the ISS Team for making this happen!

# MEHER WADHAWAN INDIA



UC BERKLEY, USA

The ISS program to me was an opportunity to finally learn about my homeland in a rich and nuanced academic setting, the tragedy of a western-centric education limited my understanding of India's past and present to a few tropes of religion, conflict and development. However, through the amazing lectures by the most esteemed professors and countless interactions with the leaders in many fields, I found an India that wasn't bound to a single definition. The diverse perspectives on development, democracy and history opened my eyes up to the multiplicity and contradictions that are so strongly present in the country. India was not only an idea conceived of by Nehru or Tagore, but rather a living, breathing experience. 'India's story' couldn't be understood through a lens of repetition or familiarity. India's narrative is diverse, nuanced and a topic of constant debate.





# NORA MADLAINA SEEBACH SWITZERLAND



UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH,  
SWITZERLAND

This country and its plurality and magnificence take everyone into its grip. This program has provided me with the possibility to weave different experiences together into one. Experiencing the country hands on by moving around New Delhi, taking the train, talking to people, learning Hindi, doing yoga, eating various flavours and daring the spice. We visited awe-inspiring places that speak loudly of the thousands of years that India has had a sophisticated culture for. These ways of immersing oneself into the culture were complimented by the academic experiences the course provided us with. Meeting scholars and important thinkers and actors of Indian academia, politics, economics, media and so on, our horizons were widened and our intellect stimulated. We were challenged and fed with food for thought. More food for thought were the students from almost nineteen countries that made up a highly diverse group allowing us to learn about each other and about our different countries and cultures, everyone brought their own perspective to the table. I will never understand India, I am not sure if anyone ever does. But taking small steps and immersing oneself into its diversity and its layers was an honour and an endeavour I will continue. Because once you are in India's grip, it will not leave you.





## RAFIA RESHI INDIA



JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA,  
INDIA

This summer I decided to stay in Delhi, not to go back Kashmir (home) and to utilize my summer break productively. After attending the summer school, I can now safely conclude that joining it was a worthwhile experience as it provided me with unparalleled learning experience across different domains of life. Being a student of Politics, I believe strengthening diplomatic ties and promoting dialogue is integral to any bilateral relation. ISS provided me with a wonderful chance to connect with others in my generation to share ideas and strategies about how to create game-changing solutions for tackling various issues in South Asia, and the world, how to stand out among hundreds of youth leaders, and how to amplify our voice in critical issues. Building strong connections with their community and learning about their diplomatic missions, eliminating some

common problems of poverty, improving rights, international peace, security, access for girls and women, resolving conflicts, securing environment sustainability, among other pressing issues of the day. Moreover, I am deeply impressed and fascinated by the quality of debates and lectures we had pertaining to different issues because I see so many ways in which they are not only locally but also globally relevant. The ISS gave me an opportunity to meet a diverse group of young people like me, each coming from a different perspective with different experiences, to address, discuss and discern over some of the most important issues of the world. This Summer School dramatically expanded my ability to better understand the beauty of multiculturalism. ISS helped me explore my own self and become more open to different views.



# SADIR ABDUL HADI LEBANON



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
LONDON, UK

Long story short, the ISS program was one of the best months of my life. I would say that three elements have made my experience that memorable. Firstly, meeting people from around the globe, who have taken the initiative to step out of their comfort zone and travel to a new country, is really magical. Each of us truly represented their respective country, with its problems and its uniqueness, and wonderful debates about how we can make the world a better place would flourish. Secondly, learning about India's history, present, and potential, thanks to lectures by experts and actual decision makers, gave me a new perspective of the world. The lectures and talks are complementary, and cover many topics, from dance to religion and politics, while drawing connections between these different fields. Lastly, getting to live for a month in one of India's major cities gave me a true sense of what urban India feels like. Interacting with locals, negotiating with rickshaw drivers, or asking for recommendations might seem like simple tasks, but performing these actions, and watching the small details, is truly eye-opening.



# **SALMA SHINAGAWA**

## **TRUJILLO**

### **MEXICO**



**AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY  
OF SINALOA, MEXICO**

India has become a part of me. The opportunity to open up the world allowed me to be in India for 6 weeks. It is amazing how this time helps you to grow up. I opened horizons and ideas, and today I feel much more able to face any challenge. It has been an incredible experience to know such historic and cultural diversity, to increase my family, to learn and to improve languages, to work in team, to make decisions and to know possibilities that I could only see in this type of experience. The cultural shock when you arrive in this country is huge: the big population, religions, cultures, histories, traffic, food, and even how to cross a road! The ISS taught me how to value everything I have and, more importantly, who I am. It also taught me to be happy with the things that I have and to share with the people that do not. Share happiness!! India has brought me unforgettable experiences, friends that became my family, and so much knowledge. Thank you India, you have opened a new door. Thanks International Summer School for making this possible.





# SAMPHIRE CASSIDY UK



OXFORD UNIVERSITY, UK

I am hugely grateful for the academic programme to provide the opportunity to examine the history and politics surrounding India as a nation. When visiting sites such as the Red Fort and Taj Mahal, my background understanding of the nation helped me to situate these beautiful architectural masterpieces into the cultural and historical context of the time. During the lectures, I had the opportunity to not only engage with renowned academics, but also share insights with students from seventeen different nations. I am not sure it is truly possible to fully understand India, but this international lens helped me to further understand the complexity and diversity of this incredible country. Through living in Delhi for six weeks, it began to feel like a home. The novelties of crossing the traffic or haggling for a rickshaw ride became part of everyday life, and we felt welcomed into the city. While we laughed about our differences, we felt like a family. I expected to learn about India, I never expected to learn so much about Mauritius, Mexico, Lebanon and the many other countries of my new friends, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to explore new ideas together. The world is a enormous, magnificent place, but the ISS helped it feel a little smaller and brought us closer together through giving us shared experiences that we will carry with us forever.



# SARA FRUMENTO

## ITALY



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
LONDON, UK

My six weeks in India have been some of the most incredible of my life. Being immersed in its complex and fascinating culture, I developed real insights into this amazing country. The four-week academic programme was engaging and deeply formative, and it constituted an invaluable source of personal enrichment. It gave me a new perspective on the subjects I was already familiar with—I study Politics in the UK with a focus on the European Union— while introducing me to completely new topics. For the two final weeks, I was part of the Service Learning component, where we had the opportunity to work as volunteers for WWF-India in Rajasthan and for Ritinjali in a local school in Gurgaon. This was a great opportunity for inner development and personal growth and it demonstrated to me once more how diverse, contradictory and beautiful India is. During these six weeks, I also had the chance to learn from other students coming from all over the world and share with them everyday discoveries and experiences. While constituting a huge difference from what I am used to, my experience in India with the ISS was profoundly enriching and I am extremely grateful for it. The Indian example, an excellent combination of tradition and development, maintaining its roots but looking to the future, is an inspiring model of demographic and economic growth, from which I definitely learnt a lot.





# SARAH ROSE ROWLAND USA



UCLA, USA

I had a wonderful time in India with the ISS program, which connected the culture of India with international students under an academic setting. The sightseeing adventures throughout Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, and Bharatpur allowed me to connect lectures with the culture and life of India and its citizens. I enjoyed meeting students from around the world and learning about them, while experiencing India together. It allowed for a deeper connection between all of us, as many of us were “out of our element” coming to a foreign country so different from our home. I felt that I was given a glimpse of really living in India with all of its sounds, smells, and sights. The fieldwork portion gave an in-depth look at how people in India both thrive and struggle with the demands of their families, their community, and their country in both an industrial and a rural setting. The ISS program provided a framework that challenged my perspective and my capabilities as a student and as an American citizen. I am grateful for this program, and the people in it for changing my life and pushing me to grow outside my comfort zone in every situation I was presented with.





**SAVANNAH  
CHANEL DANIELS  
USA/HAITI**



**UC SANTA BARBARA, USA**

India has always been both enticing yet intimidating to me; I have always been allured by its rich cultures and histories, however, it was also my intimidation by India's vastness and distinctiveness that brought me here. My experience participating in ISS 2018 was invaluable because it gave me the opportunity to not just look at India from the outside, but rather begin to understand India and see the nation in a way I do not think I would have been able to on my own. The in-depth lectures accompanied by the various conversational interactions, cultural field trips, and service learning projects thoroughly enriched my understanding of India's history, politics, as well as economics. I also began to comprehend some of its social aspects, and was made aware of the nation's immense diversity in religion, language, culture, identity and

perspective. The classroom was definitely extended to everyday life, which, in my opinion, is the best way to learn. Furthermore, the ISS program allowed me to fully grasp the idea of connectivity, empathy, and friendship, transcending oceans, borders, political conflicts, or whatever it may be. Sitting down with fellow students from eighteen countries and listening to them speak about their homes, families, goals in life, etc. allowed me to see a glimpse of the world from their point of view, and it reiterated that there is always so much to learn from the people around you. During an interaction on the first week, we were told that India is a place in which you cry both when arriving and departing: "You come in and you feel lost, but when you leave you are born again." My time in India can be described as nothing short of a rebirth. I have gained so much knowledge and I've grown immeasurably as a person. I want to thank the ISS, its team, coordinators, and fellow students for an incredible experience!





**SHIKHAR  
CHAUHAN  
INDIA**



**SOUTH ASIAN  
UNIVERSITY, INDIA**

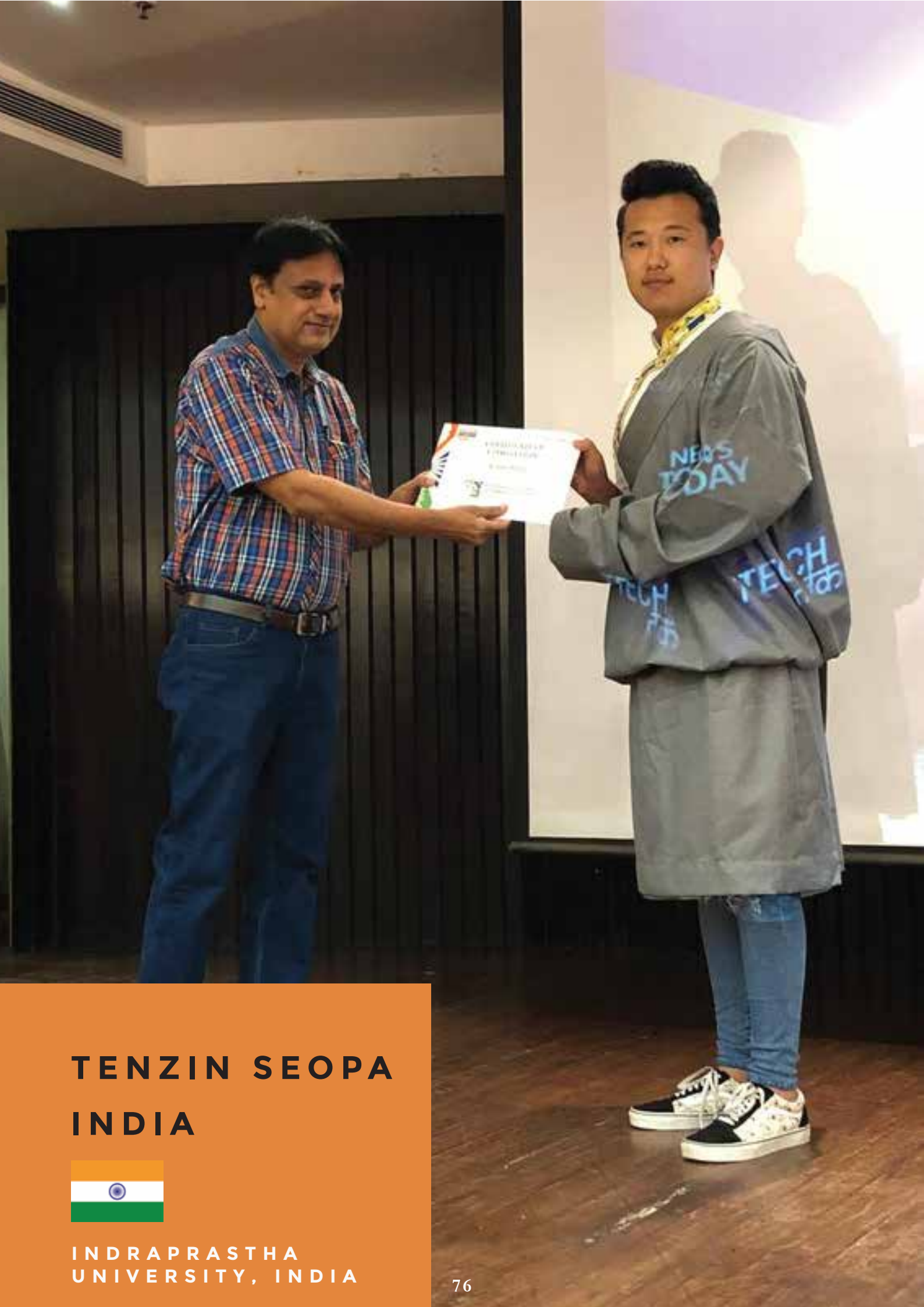


**SMRITI MISHRA**  
**INDIA**



**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU**  
**UNIVERSITY, INDIA**





# TENZIN SEOPA INDIA



INDRAPRASTHA  
UNIVERSITY, INDIA

# TENZIN YANGPHEL

## INDIA



INDRAPRASTHA  
UNIVERSITY, INDIA

I am truly blessed and honoured to have been a part of the International Summer School 2018. There were 34 students from around 19 different countries. We came from different cultures and backgrounds, having different languages and religions, but once we got to know each other well, there was a sense of oneness amongst us. We developed a close bond with each other. Each of us wanted to be on the receiving end of the other's affection and friendship. Had we emphasized more on our differences, I think the international summer school wouldn't have been such a success. I really wish that more of the 7 billion human beings realized the same: "WE ARE ONE BIG FAMILY". It was an enriching experience for me and I will carry the lessons and friendships with me to the future.





# VATTANA SARANN

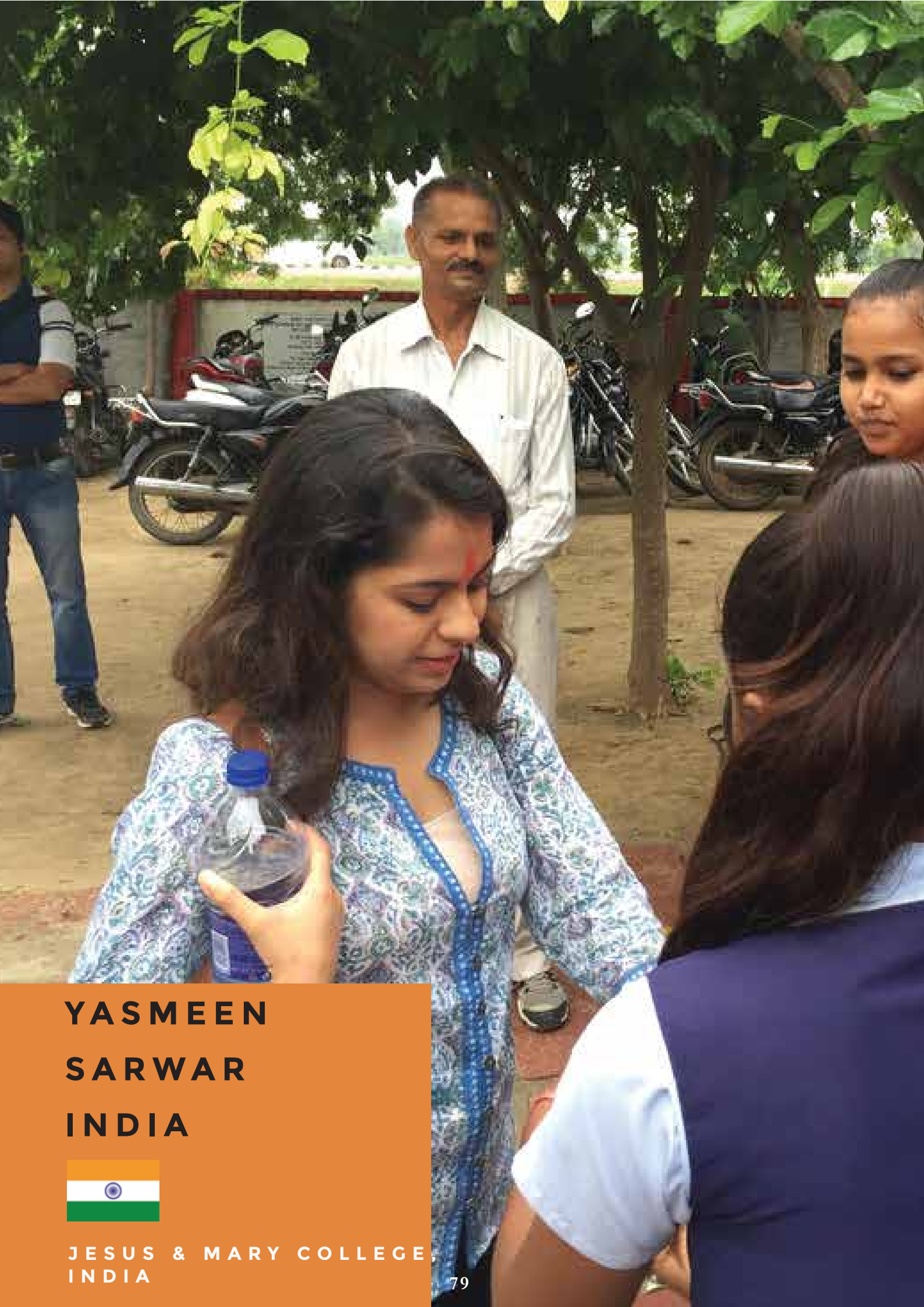
## CAMBODIA



JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA,  
INDIA

Coming to Delhi and being part of the ISS was a really amazing experience for me as I get to learn about this diverse country, culture, tradition and, last but not least, food. Not only that, people from 18 countries across the world came and sat together to learn about this country. This four week course was one of the best weeks of my entire life. I met new friends, new experience, and new things. We explored the city by ourselves and some of us went to other states to see the other parts of the country. One of the best moments in the 4 weeks was the trip to Agra and one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Taj Mahal. I have been there once and was still amazed on the second visit. Now that it has come to an end, it is really sad to say goodbye as for I made amazing friends but I know that it is not “goodbye”, it is “see you later”. I am looking forward to exploring more in this amazing country with family and friends.





**YASMEEN  
SARWAR  
INDIA**



**JESUS & MARY COLLEGE,  
INDIA**





## Essay: *“Deconstructing Otherness in the World's Most Mystified Place”*

by Joshua Cleary (United Kingdom)

Transcended by themes of development, cultural exchange and identity, one would expect to hear the names of notable writers, politicians, and academics repeated across the 36 lectures that constitute the ISS's academic program. Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Amartya Sen, all echoed through the lecture series in their respective fields, but one man, whose name transcended the entire course, appeared less well known: Edward Said. Said's paradigm-defining work “Orientalism” celebrates its 40th birthday this year, and its message of deconstructing otherness and breaking down mystification means it remains the text that best embodies the ISS's mission. In his work, referenced time and again this year, Said targets the Western mystification of the Orient, an informal area including central Asia, the Subcontinent, China and the Far East, that retains its mythical status in the West today. At least in Britain, my own country, India remains more of a concept, an idea, than a real place: the giant of the commonwealth, the land of elephant, tiger, camel and peacock; the home of spice, dye, and misunderstood religion. India exists as it always has, as an ephemeral, fairy-tale land still constrained by delightful tales and semi-fictitious imaginings, instead of as

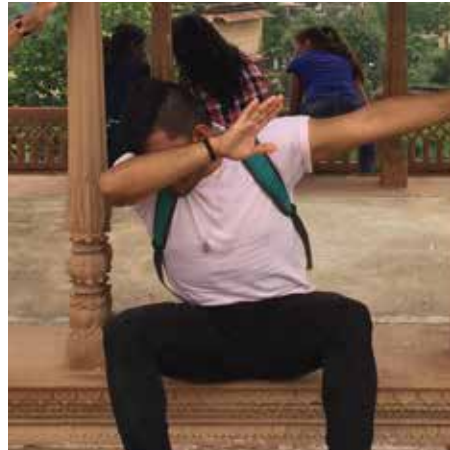
a modern nation recognised and respected through pragmatic discourse. Despite improving Anglo-Indian diplomatic and economic ties, perceptions of India remain almost as Said categorized the Orient 40 years ago: a narrative; a popular tale sitting ignorantly between Arabian Nights and the stereotypical imagery of Kipling. Without programs like ISS, India would probably remain intangible to many, more of a far-off land than a self-asserting entity on the global stage. Encouraging a breakdown of these archaic and constraining barriers through a rigorous four week academic program, followed by two weeks of service learning, the ISS has helped me locate India in the real world; no longer simply the object of stories seen through a Western lens, but a nation transformed into subject in its own right. The academic course's three modules, all of which take India as their paradigm case-study, have helped me engage with a consciously Indian perspective on international affairs as well as concepts as basic as democracy and economic growth. Democracy requires a more nuanced approach when you're dealing with an electorate more than ten times the size of the entire UK population; the informal economy is an entirely different entity when it employs not three million, but 700 million people. More broadly, the program's



ability to draw together students from 18 countries across the world has helped deconstruct otherness on a global scale. I've had the chance to learn about the day- to-day lives of students from Paraguay, Lebanon, Mauritius and Nepal, countries I knew virtually nothing about before arriving, but leave knowing I find warm friendships in all of them. I have been able to see India not only from distinct and varied Indian perspectives but through the eyes of people from Mexico, Bhutan and Italy. Every interaction we have enjoyed in India has offered a unique experience of what it means for something to be 'normal', to me, to the other students, and to the Indians we have interacted with. Whether it's the chaos of driving, having to haggle for everything we buy, learning basic Hindi, trying to teach in one of Ritinjali's amazing schools, or playing games from the countries of the other students, the past six weeks have helped me understand that there really is no

such thing as 'normal' at all. But by the same logic, though, I have come to appreciate just how obsolete 'the other' is, and by extension the liminal space of the Orient between them that Said has so precisely identified. For me, India is no longer an abstract land, a place of mystery and enigma, but a tangible global power with a uniquely powerful sense of its own reality. It is the reality of a country unafraid of embracing contradiction; a nation thriving on modernity yet maintaining strong ties with its ancient foundations, a nation of difference and unity, of pure economic strength and nuanced politics, of deprivation and unbelievable resilience. Through the ISS I have come to know a nation fully imbued with its own unique identity, an India far more 'real' than any Western attempt to mystify or orientalise it will allow, an emergent India full of promise and potential, which I cannot wait to return to in the future.





# BRIDGES

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[www.issnewdelhi.in](http://www.issnewdelhi.in)

