



BCIS ANNUAL ACTIVITY REVIEW 2025





BCIS at a Glance

VISION

To contribute to the creation of a better world where peace, justice, dignity and sustainability prevail.

MISSION

To be among the premier South Asian Institute for research, teaching and knowledge dissemination in International Affairs

VALUES

- ★ Peace and Justice
- ★ Human Rights & Freedom
- ★ Non- Partisanship
- ★ Academic Freedom
- ★ Intellectual openness
- ★ Pluralism and Diversity
- ★ Democratisation of Knowledge

Unique Framework

for Teaching & Research on International Affairs:

- ★ **Exploring commonalities** in challenges faced by the small states in a volatile global context and studying south-south perspectives in confronting these challenges
- ★ **Critically understanding** and creatively challenging the dominant worldviews that influence the discourses of international relations.
- ★ **Analysing the changing dynamics** of global power relations and the vulnerabilities they create for the global South.



The BCIS focuses on teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge relevant to Sri Lankan foreign policy, and issues relating to the global south. The teaching curricula provides students with recognised educational qualifications at high academic standards and raises public awareness of current local and global issues. An extensive Language and Cultural Education programme complements the courses on international affairs. A vibrant research programme ensures that BCIS remains at the cutting edge of new ideas and new thinking on international relations.



The BCIS was established in 1974 at the height of the cold war between the USA and USSR which had divided the world into two geo-political camps. It was a time when the arms race, the threat of nuclear war, direct and proxy wars in Asia and Africa and the militarisation of superpower relations threatened international peace. Under this backdrop, the Act of Parliament that set up the S W R D Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation envisaged that BCIS would “ (1) promote international peace, understanding and cooperation and (2) promote the study and discussion of international problems in the economic, political, educational, cultural and social fields and the dissemination of knowledge on international affairs”.

Currently, BCIS operates as the educational arm of the S W R D Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation with its own independent Council of Management and Academic Affairs Board.



Message from Chairperson

Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS)



I am pleased and proud to acknowledge the work of the Team at the BCIS under the able leadership of our Executive Director in 2025 under the guidance of the members of its Academic Affairs Board and Council of Management.

Following on from a successful commemoration of 50 years in 2024, the BCIS has gone on to embrace the next half century of its existence with an energy that has been manifested in increased public engagement, contemporary International Relations curricula and an expanded language portfolio. Having received accreditation as a degree awarding institution early in the year, the BCIS will now pursue its ambition of conducting a Masters in International Relations.

I wish the Team every success.

**Former President H. E. Chandrika
Bandaranaike Kumaratunga
Chairperson BCIS & S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike
National Memorial Foundation**



Message from Executive Director

Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS)



At BCIS we feel the compulsion to be relevant in today's world and have upgraded our technology so we can conduct hybrid classes and expand our catchment of students. New modules on contemporary issues have been integrated into our certificate, diploma, higher diploma and post-graduate diploma courses. We also initiated several short courses that explore key topics in depth. I am grateful to our visiting lecturers for being curious and flexible and hope that they continue to enjoy the experience of working with us. Our research team brings in fresh dimensions to our thinking and academic work, especially around digitalization and climate change, and our flagship Emerging Scholars Symposium (ESS) in 2025 was focused on rethinking international relations. We are also proud to record the expansion of our language courses to include three new languages in 2025 - Thai, Russian and Persian.

Our most exciting work however has been in the area of public education. Our public facing activities have raised the BCIS profile. We are acquiring a reputation as a hub for diverse conversations and debates: a place where the public can engage with different perspectives and local and international actors on a variety of issues such as south-south solidarity, democracy, alternative approaches to economy, disaster capitalism, climate change, statelessness, gender, religion and media. Special events are also held for secondary school children on International Women's Day and during reading week in October.

Among the uncertainties and convulsions of world politics, we will continue to create a space for critical thinking and introspection, and endeavour to contribute to the growth and dissemination of knowledge that can transcend the horrendous tensions and conflicts that make the world such an unsafe place for so many,

I have had the privilege of leading the BCIS team through 2025 and it is with great pleasure that I introduce this Annual Activity Review. Early in 2025 we were successful in obtaining accreditation as a degree awarding institution from the Ministry of Higher Education, a process that was initiated by my predecessor, Professor Gamini Keerawella. We are now moving towards initiating quality, cutting-edge post-graduate degree programmes for students in Sri Lanka and the region.

Ms. Priyanthi Fernando
Executive Director, BCIS



BCIS Highlights 2025

- ★ The new year began with **recognition of the BCIS from the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education as a Degree Awarding Institute.**

TEACHING

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Student registration in 2025 increased significantly. **Enrolment for the first 2025 batch of International Relations increased marginally from 2024**, but offering two batches in 2025 has meant that the **total enrolments have more than doubled from 2024 to 2025.**

Most of the new **registrations for 2025 International Relations courses** were students from the **Colombo (126), Gampaha (51) and Kalutara (21)** districts. There were also students who came from **13 other districts.** It is hoped that as we **develop facilities for more hybrid teaching** of both International Relations and Languages, the participation of students from outside the Western Province will increase.



303 students from the International Relations programme graduated in 2025.

BCIS courses are taught largely by visiting lecturers with multidisciplinary qualifications and





skills. The diversity provides for providing a range of perspectives – from the best of academia in international relations and international politics, to more practical experiences in diplomacy and foreign affairs. BCIS students have access to the many public lectures that are being organised by the centre, as well as to the BCIS Library.

In 2025 BCIS carried out **five short courses** conducted by special visiting lecturers. They included a course on

- **Debates on Decolonisation & Decoloniality: Undoing Colonial Power and Knowledge** by **Prof. Kiran K. Grewal**, Visiting Professor, Department of Gender Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science
- **Creative Research Methods of Social Sciences** by **Dr Dr. Sasanka Perera and Dr. Anushka Kahandagamage** of Colombo Institute of Human Sciences
- **Advanced Workshop on the Interpretation of Legal Documents: Theories, Principles & Practice** by **Dr. Rohan Edirisinha, Ms. Ruhanie Perera and Dr. Nishara Mendis**
- 3 short courses on aspects of **Democracy and democratisation** by **Emerita Professor Shalini Randeria**, former Rector of the Central European University.

The **Inauguration of the International Relations courses** featured alumni **Ms. Anudi Gunasekera** (Miss Sri Lanka 2024 for Miss World 2025) and **Mr. Ravi Gamage** (Chief Human Resources Officer of the Capital Maharaja Group) as Guests of Honour. Reflecting on their time at BCIS, they highlighted the value of IR training and transferable skills.





LANGUAGES

The BCIS also **added 3 new languages to its portfolio: Thai, Russian and Persian**. It continued its beginners, intermediate and advance courses in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hindi, Japanese Korean, Spanish, Sinhala and Tamil, **collaborating with the Alliance Francais, the Chinese Cultural Centre, the Russian Cultural Centre and the Thai and Iranian Embassies** to deliver these courses. The Language and Cultural Affairs Division also has close relationships with the **Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Colombo**.



On October 11, 2025, the BCIS held the **Inauguration Ceremony for its thirteen language programmes**, aimed at enhancing global proficiency and cross-cultural dialogue. Ms. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director of the SAARC Cultural Centre was the Guest of Honor, who emphasized the critical role of language in strengthening international relations and fostering a linguistically diverse, globally connected community.

Enrolment in the Language Courses increased by 40% in 2025. While Western Province registrations dominated – **Colombo (260), Gampaha(131), Kalutara(41)** - there were more registrations from **15 other districts**.



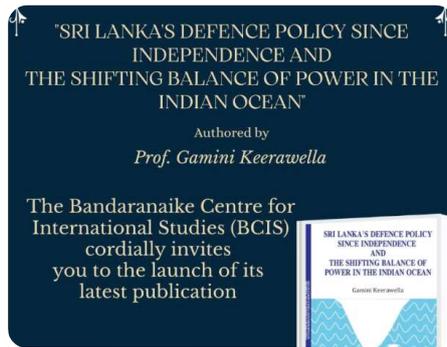


RESEARCH

Constituted in 2024, the BCIS research team comprises professionals with expertise and interest in key areas of international relations and politics. These include expert knowledge in **international public law, global political economy, democracy & psephology, security and terrorism issues, maritime affairs, blue economy, climate change and digitisation.**

Former Executive Director, Professor Gamini Keerawella, lends his research expertise to the Centre. BCIS was privileged to **publish Keerawella's book on: Sri Lanka's Defence Policy since Independence and the Shifting Balance of Power in the Indian Ocean** and **'Reflections on the Continuing Crises of Post-War Sri Lanka'**, co-edited by **Professor Gamini Keerawella and Professor Amal Jayawardena**

The research team also published several monographs including the one on **'International Frameworks on Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Activism & its Impacts on Climate Policy in the Global South'** by **Maheshi Jaayewardene**



EMERGING SCHOLARS SYMPOSIUM 2025

The BCIS' flagship event the **08th Emerging Scholars Symposium** had as its theme: **"Rethinking the Future of International Relations"**. It attracted **160 abstract submissions**, of which **59 outstanding papers** were selected for presentation at the Symposium itself. Presenters included young scholars from the region, from **Nepal, Bangladesh and India.**

Shiran Ilanperuma from the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research was the keynote speaker.





DELEGATIONS

In May 2025, BCIS hosted delegations from **Sichuan University, China**, led by Professor Ding Zhongyi, and **Randolph College, USA**, led by President Sue Ott Rowlands. Senior BCIS officials, the Executive Director Priyanthi Fernando and Director of Education Dr. Bhagya Senaratne discussed possibilities for future teaching and research collaborations. These meetings underscored the BCIS's commitment to fostering international academic partnerships between Asian and Western institutions.



BCIS PROMOTION

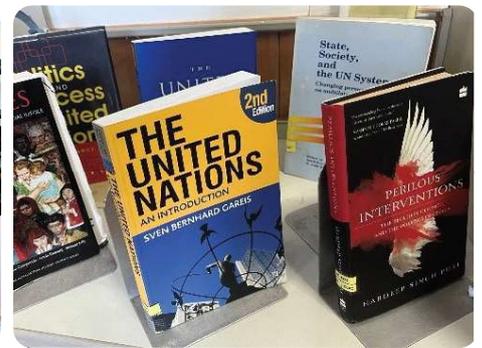
In 2025, BCIS leveraged its strategic location within the BMICH premises to maintain a strong presence at major exhibitions like **EDEX**, the **Education Fair 2025** and the **Zahira College Education Fair** to successfully engage with local students.





LIBRARY

For students, lecturers and researchers from within BCIS and for visiting scholars, the library provides a quiet space for reading and study. It has a collection of approximately **16,000 books** for reference and for lending. This includes the collections of several prominent thinkers on international affairs: **S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, H L de Silva, Vernon Mendis, Lalith Athulathmudali, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Jayantha Dhanapala, Mangala Samaraweera, and Tissa Jayatilleke** – giving library users the opportunities to read what they read.



The Library is also a hub for discussions on writers and their work. The library team carries out different activities to promote reading and greater use of the library. They have created **Book Corners to commemorate International Days**, organised **Author Talks** and **Human Library** conversations that feature diverse academic and strategic insights. Notable speakers in 2025 included

- **Dr. Darshi Toradeniya**, who explored the history of women's health in Sri Lanka
- **Dr. Sasanka Perera**, who examined the intersection of social science and poetry
- **Mr. Shakthi de Silva**, who analyzed structural challenges in Indo-Sri Lanka relations.
- **Mr. T. Sananthan and Ms. Hasani Haputhanthri** discussing "connected histories"
- **Dr. Rajiv Ranjan** from the University of Delhi, who offered expert perspectives on India-China relations and the evolving global power dynamics.





Every year the Library conducts events for secondary school students to commemorate **International Women’s Day (IWD)** in March, and the **Reading Month** in October.

In 2025, the IWD event focused on the development of the women's movement locally and internationally, and on **Sri Lanka’s submission to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in February. **Kumudini Samuel** from the Women and Media Collective, and **Raaya Gomez** a young lawyer were the key speakers.

In October **Dr Madhubashini Dissanayake Ratnayake** conducted a workshop for school children on **“A Friend in Need: Why Reading and Writing are Crucially Important for Young Lives”**.



BCIS Library hosted 2 impactful workshops in collaboration with the **Sri Lanka Library Association: the OpenBiblio Library Automation Software workshop** in August and the **"Power of a Page" workshop** conducted by Mr. D.M.T Madushanka in October. The OpenBiblio Library Automation Software workshop provided trilingual, hands-on training in cataloguing and circulation to improve library management through open-source technology. Power of a Page workshop focused on career readiness, covering professional and Europass CV writing, cover letters, creating zip folders, building LinkedIn accounts, navigating online and physical applications, and developing interview skills.



PUBLIC AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Engagement with the public and creating public awareness about international affairs is a key element of BCIS work. Several public events on a range of topics were organised at the BCIS during 2025. They featured local, regional and international speakers and participants.

Revisiting History

BCIS hosted 2 events that encouraged reflection on the Bandung Conference of 1955 and revival of its spirit. An **initial discussion** with former Ambassador and Foreign Secretary **H. M. G. S. Palihakkara** and **Mr. Shiran Illanperuma**, Political Economist of the Tricontinental and facilitated by **Dr Sakuntala Kadirigama** of the Law and Society Trust on **'Foreign Policy in times of Crisis: Lessons from Bandung'**

This was followed by a **3 day international conference** in collaboration with **IDEAS (International Development Economics Associates)** and **Yukthi** commemorating **70 years after Bandung: Challenges and Struggles on the Road to Self Determination and South – South Solidarity**. BCIS was able to create a space for Sri Lankan audiences to be exposed to national and international thinkers on the evolution of foreign policy of non-alignment, delinking and degrowth, centre periphery power analysis and issues relating to decolonisation.



BCIS also continued its long standing engagement with issues of democracy and democratisation with a dialogue between **Professor Christoph Jaffrelot**, Senior Research Fellow at CERI Science Po/CNRS in Paris and **Professor Sharika Thiranyagama**, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Standard. They explored issues of **'Inequality and democracy in South Asia'**



A **public Lecture** titled **'Re-enchanting Democracy: Reflections on South Asia'** by **Mr. Yogendra Yadav**, Indian Activist and Political Thinker was organized by the BCIS **in association with the Social Scientists' Association (SSA)**

Alternative Approaches

In 2025, the BCIS responded to the current context of national debt restructuring, and the global challenges of climate change, by organising various public facing events on the issues.

Mr Eric Toussaint of the Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM) delivered a public lecture on **'Exiting the Debt Crises to Reclaim the Future – Global and Regional Experiences'**.



Dr. Corina Rodriguez Enriquez, Feminist Economist and the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET), Buenos Aires, Argentina facilitated an informal discussion on the theme **'Argentina, IMF and Feminist'**

Mr. Afsar Jafri from GRAIN led a discussion on contemporary developments in multilateral trade under the topic **'The Politics of International Trade - FTAs and the need for alternative trade frameworks'**.

Sushovan Dhar from CADTM spoke at BCIS on **disaster capitalism**, framing Sri Lanka's post-Cyclone Ditwah crisis within the "Capitalocene" where planetary instability is driven by fossil-fuel-based capitalism. Dhar highlighted how capitalism exploits disasters and urged a shift toward solidarity and shared struggle to move beyond mitigation and develop radical alternatives to the climate crisis.

And a critical discussion by Senior Researcher **Amali Wedagedara** on the **International People's Tribunal regarding the World Bank and IMF's impact on South Asian debt.**

ARGENTINA, IMF & FEMINIST ACTIVISM

Dr. Corina Rodriguez Enriquez
National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET), Buenos Aires, Argentina

June 17, 2025
10:00 am - 12:00 noon
Classroom 7-102, BCIS

DISCUSSION

POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

with
Afsar Jafri, GRAIN

September 24, 2025

11.00 am onwards
@Classroom 102, BCIS

Hybrid event - Facebook Post

EXITING THE DEBT CRISES TO RECLAIM THE FUTURE - GLOBAL AND REGIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wednesday 29 JAN | OLYMPUS, BCIS | 04.30 - 6.00 PM

PUBLIC SEMINAR

REGISTER NOW

Eric Toussaint
Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM), Belgium

Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS), BMICH, Baudhaloka Maratha, Colombo 07
researchdivision@bcis.edu.lk





Emerging Issues

BICIS also organised a panel discussion with **Mr Matthew Pye**, author of *Plato Tackles* and teacher of philosophy of the European School, Brussels and two Sri Lankans, **Mr Muditha Katuwawela**, Executive Director of the Peral Protectors, and **Professor Terney Pradeep Kumara**, Director General of the Department of Coastal Conservation and Coastal Resource Management on **“The Climate Crisis: Ethical Imperatives, Ocean Ecosystems and Community Action”**. This was a very eye-opening panel discussion that addressed theoretical, practical and policy issues relating to the environment.

And a very stimulating address by **Amal de Chickera**, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Institute of Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI) on **“Scrutinising the State through the lens of Statelessness”** that highlighted an issue that in our conversations around international relations is not often addressed.



Other public education and public awareness creating events included a panel discussion featuring **Professor Wasantha Seneviratne**, Chair Professor, Department of Public and International Law at the Colombo University, and **Mr Neshan Gunasekera**, CEO of the World Future Council reflected on **“Aggression, nuclear risks and the duty of states to future generations”**.

We were able to do a **podcast in our IR Webchats series**. **Mr. Abdul Hameed Waris**, Research Associate at the Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR) and Lecturer at the University of Lahore talked to BCIS Senior Researcher **Maheshi Jayawardane** on **“Regional Climate Change Challenges and the Need for New Diplomatic Mechanisms**.

BCIS PANEL DISCUSSION

“States Under Scrutiny: Reflections on Aggression, Nuclear Risks, and the Duty of States to Future Generations”

<p>Prof. Wasantha Seneviratne Chair Professor, Department of Public and International</p>	<p>Neshan Gunasekera Chief Executive Officer, World Future Council</p>
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Regional and International Politics

BCIS also organized a high-level panel discussion titled **"Beyond the Border; India-Pakistan Unpacked,"** featuring a diverse group of regional security and strategic experts: **Major General Binoj Basnyat:** Strategic Analyst from the Nepal Army, offering perspectives on Himalayan geopolitics, **Dr. Asantha Senevirathna:** Senior Lecturer at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, providing insights into Sri Lankan defense and regional security and **Prof. Shahab Enam Khan:** Representative from Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh, focusing on South Asian diplomatic and strategic dynamics.

Russian Ambassador Levan S. Dzhagaryan conducted a guest lecture on the **Russian perspective on the use of force in international law**, reflecting the Centre's commitment to multifaceted global discourse.



Gender, Religion and Media

BCIS hosted **Roma Chatterji** for a discussion titled **"A Ramayana for the Dark Age of Kali."** The session explored the enduring relevance of the ancient epic in contemporary culture, specifically how it is reimagined through modern myth-making, science fiction, and superhero narratives.

BCIS hosted a diverse array of lectures and discussions spanning gender, religion, and global economics. Significant highlights included **Dr. Pooja Kalita's** research talk on gender roles and food culture titled **Women Eating and Men Cooking in Public Spaces.** Academic exploration continued with **Dr. Anushka Kahandagamage's** lecture on **new Buddhist movements in post-war Sri Lanka**

Public awareness is also created through our engagements online. In addition to our presence on facebook, instagram and LinkedIn




GUEST LECTURE
**Use of Force in International Law:
A Russian Perspective**



Ambassador Levan S. Dzhagaryan
Ambassador of the Russian Federation in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and to the Republic of Maldives



BCIS Governance

The BCIS is the educational arm of the **SWRD Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation (BNMF)** but has its own, non-statutory governing bodies: the **Council of Management** and the **Academic Affairs Board**. The Boards were shuffled to address some of the concerns of the Ministry of Higher Education during our accreditation review.

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT



Chairperson,
Former President HE Madam
Chandrika Bandaranaike
Kumaratunga



Professor
Amal Jayewardene



Prof. Gamini
Keerawella



Tissa Jayatillaka



Ambassador
Sarala Fernando



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BOARD



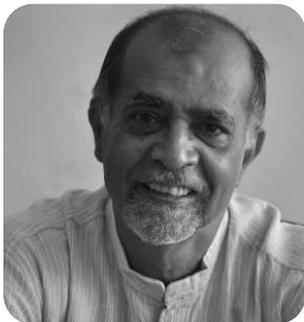
Former President HE Madam
Chandrika Bandaranaike
Kumaratunga



Chairman
Professor
Amal Jayewardene



Prof. Gamini
Keerawella



Professor
Jayadeva Uyangoda



Deshamanya
Radhika Coomaraswamy



Dr Pakiasothy
Saravanamuttu



Professor Nirmal
Ranjith Dewasiri,



Professor
Deepika Udagama



Dr Athulasiri
Samarakoon.



BCIS MANAGEMENT & TEAM



Executive Director,
Ms Priyanthi Fernando
(from August 1, 2024).



Director (Research),
Dr Nishara Mendis
(till July 2025)



Director (Education),
Dr Bhagya Senaratne



**Registrar/
Chief Administrative Officer,**
Mr Lalith Weeraddana



Research Team,
Dr Amali Wedegedara



Research Team,
Isuri Wickramarathna



Research Team,
Maheshi Jayewardena



Research Team,
Sinduja Jayaratna
(till September 2025)



**Research Team &
Communications,**
Tharishi Hewawithanagamage



**IR Teaching &
Communications,**
Mahesha Pathirana



IR Teaching,
Sanduni Lakshika



IR Teaching,
Sathishka Madushani



IR Teaching,
Nelum Dissanayake



Language Teaching & Communications,
Tharanga Jayaweera



Language Teaching,
J C Madushani



Language Teaching & Communications,
Dhamithri Navodya



Examinations,
Kanchana Senevirathna



Examinations,
Shameera Samsudeen



Library,
Chamilla Gamage



Library & Communications,
Shehani Gamage



Library,
Hasani Jinadasa



Finance & Administration,
Kalani Dilrukshi



Finance & Administration,
Nisansala Kalyani



Finance & Administration,
Lalith Rathnayaka



Finance & Administration,
Nishani Jayaweera



Finance & Administration,
Anjali Munasinghe



Finance, Administration & Communications,
Dharshana Udayakumara



Finance & Administration,
Kanchana Perera



Finance & Administration,
Jayantha Weerasinghe



Finance & Administration,
Upul Rajapaksa



**BANDARANAIKE CENTRE FOR
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**