



# International Centre for Sustainability (ICfS) Newsletter

Q4 2024



## Q4 Newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of the International Centre for Sustainability's (ICfS) newsletter. In this quarterly update we introduce our upcoming events and recap key projects and milestones from October to December 2024. Our mission is to foster a deeper alliance between the UK and India, by placing sustainability at the heart of everything we do. Through research, training and development and influencing policy, we focus on harmonising the needs of people, planet and profit to build a more sustainable future.



## Q4 2024 Recap: October – December



**Sachin Nandha**  
Strengthening Partnerships in India

Sachin Nandha had a productive quarter, driving forward initiatives for the International Centre for Sustainability (ICfS) and providing thought leadership on critical global issues.

During a trip to India, Sachin and Jade Hagen visited FLAME University in Pune, celebrated for its liberal arts curriculum that develops changemakers with a focus on holistic, equitable and inclusive approaches. Sachin delivered a talk on India's sustainable rise, addressing environmental challenges, poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. He also worked with Rothschild & Co, where he presented innovative frameworks for interpreting risk in international investments, aligning financial strategies with sustainability goals.

In his writing, Sachin explored the strategic importance of the Himalayas within the UK's Indo-Pacific policy, emphasising water security and environmental diplomacy. He also examined challenges within the Anglican Church, highlighting its evolving role amidst theological and cultural changes and cautioning against potential societal divisions.



### Sachin's Articles

- [The Future of the Anglican Church: A Schism on the Horizon?](#)  
(October 2, 2024)
- [Why Britain Needs a Himalayan Strategy](#)  
(October 22, 2024)

In November, Sachin also attended COP29 in Azerbaijan where he focused on building collaborations around the West-India corridor, environmental diplomacy and sustainable investments. Back in London, ICfS funders expressed satisfaction with the Centre's progress, and a new partnership with the Tree Council began, sharing best practices in living tree stock management.

In a personal milestone, Sachin's first book, which took seven years to research and write, is due to come out in March. Published by Penguin, it is a biography of a pre-independence historical character. More to follow soon.



**Shruti Kapil**  
Researching Security Matters

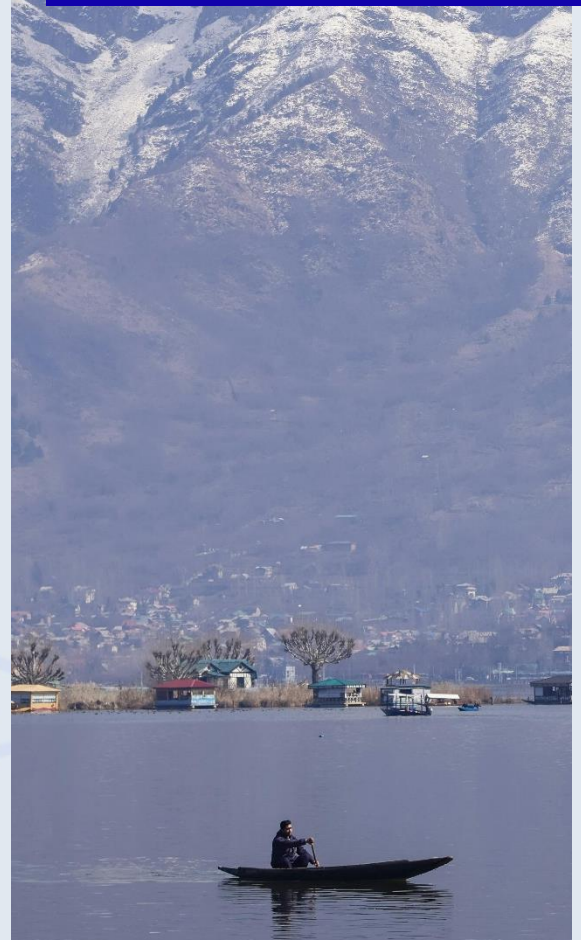
The *Security & Mutual Dependence Desk* made significant progress this quarter with impactful research, articles and collaborations. Key publications included an analysis of the Jammu & Kashmir election results, showcasing India's democratic spirit and its implications for regional governance and stability. Another article highlighted India's strategic importance to US foreign policy, examining the deepening ties between the two democracies. Additionally, a forthcoming piece will address India's water crisis as a critical national security concern, offering insights into challenges and solutions.

Participation in a seminar at Ashoka University further strengthened the desk's focus on critical water vulnerability and the water-energy nexus, fostering opportunities for collaboration in the coming year.

Shruti also contributed to shaping the desk's future priorities, presenting three major research proposals for 2025 at the Fellowship Roundtable. Ongoing initiatives include preliminary research on water security, building connections with organisations in India and the UK, and initiating a project on women's workplace safety through EDI policies. Insights into Manipur's security dynamics were shared internally, emphasising root causes and current challenges.

### Shruti's Articles

- [Jammu & Kashmir elections: A demonstration of India's democratic spirit](#) (October 22, 2024)
- [Why India is a Critical Geopolitical Partner for the United States](#) (October 30, 2024)



Looking ahead, Shruti plans a field visit to Manipur to engage with local stakeholders and publish a detailed brief. Her participation in international water security conferences will address India's looming crisis, while the women's safety project aims to integrate safety measures into ESG frameworks in India and the UK.

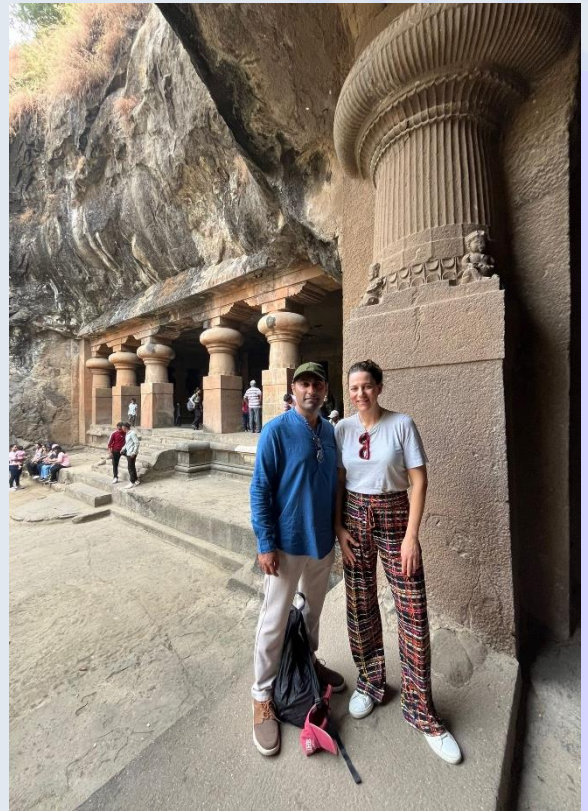


**Jade Hagen**  
Building the ICfS's Network

"Q4 has been an exciting time for me at the ICfS, sinking my teeth in deeper into my role, better understanding our work and research verticals, learning vast amounts about India, her history and her politics, and building relationships with our team and our wider network of supporters and collaborators.

In October I was first introduced to the concept of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). I'm certain you will see my colleague Pravar's mention of his attendance at the IKS Conference in India in December, and you will hear about IKS in Professor Rina Arya's upcoming event on January 29<sup>th</sup> about mental health in an Asian context. In my learnings on India so far, as well as my experiences during our trip there in November (more on this below), I was impressed to see IKS represented in many diverse and meaningful ways. It has underscored the profound cultural and historical richness of India and has been a great learning lesson in my new role this quarter. Once you become aware of something, it begins to appear all around.

At the end of October, we launched our monthly Forum Mentis (in Latin) Buddhya Samvaad (in Sanskrit) sessions with the ICfS team. These sessions are a meeting of minds, where one person presents a topic, the team debates it, we challenge each other's perspectives, open our minds and keep each other sharp. So far Sachin has presented on



Jade and Sachin at the Elephanta Caves in Mumbai

Hokusai's Great Wave off Kanagawa print and the relation of its symbolism to the mission and importance of our work at the ICfS, and I presented on the ethical conflict of appreciating art and other works by historical figures we view morally flawed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our colleague Pravar will be up next, please see our LinkedIn page for our update on his session. We are contemplating opening them up to our members and will share news on this soon.

In November, Sachin and I took a trip together to India, where we started in Mumbai, visited Pune, then Aurangabad and ended in New Delhi. This trip was incredibly diverse and a wonderful experience for me to meet with several of our stakeholders and collaborators. We met with entrepreneurs, learning and understanding about their growth journey, their sustainability efforts and the opportunities and challenges they are facing in modern day business in India.

We had the pleasure and privilege of visiting two esteemed universities, Flame in Pune and Ashoka in Delhi and we also met with several foundations and charities in the impact space, all resulting in the first steps towards collaborating on research output. Lastly, I had the pleasure of visiting the truly majestic Ajanta Caves, giving me more insight into India's rich history. I'm grateful for the opportunity this trip gave Sachin and I to work more closely, for meeting our New Delhi based researcher Shruti in person and for the deep learning lessons it has given me on India and her civilisational history.

Aside from all this fantastic cerebral stimulation, I promise I have also been rolling up my sleeves and getting my hands dirty. Throughout Q4 I have become more proficient in our finances, worked on the preparation for our Indian Migration Photo Exhibition and made valuable connections in our network and within the City of London. In December I started planning our first 100 days in 2025 and that is what is currently keeping me busy.

We are very happy to share with you the launch of our in-person K-Lectures at the ICfS, with our inaugural session taking place on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The K-Lectures will honour the legacy of Jiddu Krishnamurthi, fostering inquiry, intellectual exploration and ethical reflection. The conversation topics will be grand concepts, bold visions, inspirational talks that challenge your thinking, given by great thinkers, innovators and changemakers from the UK and beyond. We look forward to seeing you at the Centre at a K-Lecture!

On my last day of the year in the office, I had the immense pleasure of meeting our esteemed fellow Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE in person. Dr Pattni is a renowned psychologist and Hindu theologian. After we spoke about business, much of our conversation focussed on his work on meditation. It was the best cup of tea I had in 2024."





## Pravar Petkar

Researching Sustainable  
Democratic Systems

Head of the *Strengthening Democracy Desk*, Pravar Petkar explores topics at the nexus of democracy, foreign policy and participatory governance. His recent op-eds critique India's proposed "One Nation, One Election" policy, noting its potential to boost electoral efficiency but warning of risks to local politics and accountability. Other pieces examine how US foreign policy under Trump or Harris could influence India, drawing parallels with US-China relations and their implications for India's ascent. Pravar has also analysed the strain on global democracy following Trump's re-election, highlighting Project 2025 and Musk's Twitter/X ownership, and urging the UK to reassess its China strategy. His latest work explores AI's role in democracy, advocating participatory experiments supported by adaptive regulations.

On November 6, Pravar organised a roundtable on leveraging emerging technology for democracy, featuring David Wood and Simon. Earlier, on October 16, he moderated a webinar with Dr. Manohar Shinde on IKS, exploring how indigenous traditions contribute to sustainable development.

In December, Pravar represented the ICfS at the International IKS Conference 2024 in Gujarat, India and participated in events like the Harmony Group Diwali Briefing and Bridge India's UK-India relations discussion. The Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) movement seeks to promote indigenous and traditional ways of learning from the Indian subcontinent and bring these into the mainstream of Indian education and academic research. IKS is being applied to all areas of learning, from agriculture to holistic medicine, economics, architecture and educational pedagogy.

His research on citizens' assemblies is nearing publication, alongside a paper co-authored with our fellow, Dr. Pavel Cenkl on regenerative learning and participatory decision-making.



### Pravar's Articles

- [Should India's 'One Nation' have One Election?](#)  
(October 10, 2024)
- [The Citizens' Jury on Assisted Dying – How Not to Do Deliberative Democracy](#)  
(October 22, 2024)
- [What will the next US President's approach to China mean for a rising India?](#)  
(November 1, 2024)
- [After Trump's Victory: A Changing Global Order, Strained Democracies and Weakening Guardrails](#)  
(November 6, 2024)
- [Evolving Democracy in the Age of AI](#)  
(November 28, 2024)



## Nitish Rai Parwani

Empowering Diasporic Communities

This quarter, Nitish focused on key initiatives to address pressing issues for the UK's Hindu and Indian diaspora. In November, Nitish and Pravar represented the ICfS before diverse diasporic communities, including a presentation to the Harmony Group, which unites over 120 Hindu and Indian organisations across the UK.

In the media, Nitish contributed insightful articles and commentary. An interview with Asian Voice explored how India's pragmatic diplomacy offers valuable lessons for the UK amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. By balancing ties with both nations while championing peace, India's approach serves as a guide for aligning UK policy with global stability.

In another piece, Nitish examined the UK's Assisted Dying Bill from the perspective of Dharmic faiths, including Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism. He highlighted the bill's ethical concerns and called for a broader dialogue that respects these traditions' spiritual values and unique approaches to end-of-life care.

Lastly, Nitish is working on a report which explores the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through a Dharmic lens, aiming to integrate them into the SDGs.

### Nitish's Articles

- [India's Pragmatic Diplomacy Can Guide UK's Long Term Goals](#) (December 5, 2024)
- [Perspectives of Dharmic-Faith on the British Assisted Dying Bill](#) (December 20, 2024)



**Chloe Schuber**  
Political Research

This quarter, Chloe Schuber made contributions to research, writing, and operations at the ICfS. Her articles explored key topics, including how UK universities could lead climate awareness by integrating sustainability into their curriculum, fostering community engagement, and promoting greener campuses. This approach aimed to equip students with the tools to combat the climate crisis and inspire future climate-conscious leaders.

Chloe also examined the evolving dynamics of US-India relations in the context of the 2024 elections, analysing the distinct approaches of key candidates. Her work highlighted their differing priorities, from defence and countering China, to climate action and multilateral diplomacy, while underscoring India's vital role in the Indo-Pacific and addressing global challenges.

Moving forward, Chloe began research for two upcoming projects: one exploring youth political engagement in the UK, US and India, focusing on new forms of activism, and another examining the implications of citizen surveillance on democracy. Both projects aimed to address pressing socio-political issues.

On the operations front, Chloe is helping to organise a photography exhibition celebrating the Indian diaspora's migration stories from India and Eastern Africa. The event aims to preserve and showcase the resilience and cultural richness of these journeys while fostering a sense of community. *Submissions close January 31, see [this link](#) for more.*

For our November team building, we celebrated Diwali together and visited *The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975-1998*, an exhibition at the Barbican.



### Chloe's Articles

- [Educating for a Sustainable Tomorrow: How UK Universities Can Lead Climate Awareness](#) (December 19, 2024)
- [Navigating US-India Relations in the Context of the 2024 Elections: Trump vs. Harris](#) (October 25, 2024)



# Looking Ahead

## Upcoming Events

**22 January:** *K-Lecture* "[Ethics at the Intersection of AI & Society](#)" (In person)  
A discussion on the ethical challenges of AI behaviour, regulation, and global justification, featuring experts Ansgar Koene, David Wood, and James Wilson.

**29 January:** "[Traditions of Wellbeing: A South Asian Context](#)" (Webinar)  
An event led by Professor Rina Arya exploring the intersection of mental health and Indian knowledge systems, focusing on holistic healing practices like Ayurveda and their role in modern mental health.

## Save the date. *Upcoming K-Lectures:*

**13 February:** Lord Tony Sewell will explore identity, culture and success through his introduction to his new book '*Black Success: The Surprising Truth*'

**26 March:** Dr. Sailesh Rao will discuss how they key to solving the climate crisis is focusing on land use and animal agriculture.

If you are interested in becoming a member, [please follow this link to our website with information on our different offers.](#)

If you would like to hire our venue or podcast room, [please click here.](#)

## The ICfS Team

For more information, visit [icfs.org.uk](https://icfs.org.uk) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to stay updated on our latest projects and publications.

**International Centre for Sustainability**, London, January 2025

