

12TH EDITION GALLE DIALOGUE 2025

International Maritime Conference



Maritime outlook of the Indian Ocean under changing dynamics



Keynote Address

Dr. Harini Amarasuriya

Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



Dr. Harini Amarasuriya was sworn in as the 17th Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on 18 November 2024. She contested the general election held in November 2024

as the Colombo District Group Leader of the National People's Power and won with a record number of 655,289 preferential votes. The Prime Minister also serves as the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education.

Dr. Harini Amarasuriya was born on 6th March 1970 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her multifaceted career spans academia, social activism and grassroots politics, with a focus on youth issues, human rights and social development. She is currently serving the country as a prominent Sri Lankan scholar, social activist and politician.

For the past decade, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya served as a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the Open University of Sri Lanka. In addition to her teaching responsibilities and the revision of the Sociology curriculum, she was actively involved in administrative leadership roles at the university and has also served as a member of the University Grants Commission's Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Social Equity since 2016. She served as Secretary of the Open University Teachers' Association (2012 and 2013) and Assistant Secretary (2014 and 2015) and Secretary (2016) of the University Teachers' Association, where she campaigned for increased allocations for education in the national budget.

As a researcher, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya has published treatises on elite politics, dissent, social justice, discrimination and youth, female-headed families, child labour, institutionalized child care, early marriage, well-being, educational research and intellectual property. In 2014, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya was the lead author of the National Human Development Report for Sri Lanka and also participated in drafting the National Youth Policy of Sri Lanka that year. In 2016, she also served as a member of the People's Representative Committee (PRC) on Constitutional Reforms of Sri Lanka. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya received her basic education from Bishop's College, Colombo and pursued higher education in several foreign countries. She holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Delhi and a MA in Applied Anthropology and Development Studies from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. For that degree, she conducted a research thesis on female migrant workers. In 2011, she wrote her PhD thesis on child protection in Sri Lanka and received PhDs in Social Anthropology and International

Health and Development from the University of Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University.

Dr. Harini Amarasuriya has served for many years as a board member of NEST, a Sri Lankan community health organization; the Center for Women's Research (CENWOR), an organization engaged in research on women's and gender issues in Sri Lanka; and the Law & Society Trust, an organization engaged in legal research, advocacy, and human rights documentation in Sri Lanka.

After the National People's Power Party leader Anura Kumara Disanayake assumed office as President in the September 2024 presidential election, Dr. Harini Amarasuriya became the 16th Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and served as the Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and Sports, the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils, Local Government, and Labour, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security, Cooperative Development, Industries and Entrepreneurship Development, and the Ministry of Health. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya is also the Prime Minister of the smallest cabinet in Sri Lanka's history.

Welcome Remarks

Vice Admiral Kanchana Banagoda, RSP, USP, ndc,psc Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy



Banagoda Arachchilage Kanchana Silan Priyanka Banagoda is a proud product of S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela and Bandarawela Central College. Joining the Sri Lanka Navy on 15th September 1989 as an Officer Cadet of the 19th intake, in the Executive branch, he completed basic training at the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee. Due to his outstanding performance in basic training, he was privileged to secure an opportunity to attend the prestigious International Midshipman Course at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth in the UK and proudly earned his commission in 1991.

He successfully completed the Sub Lieutenant Technical Course at the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee in 1994 and underwent the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Specialization Course at the Indian Naval Ship Venduruthy, Kochi in India and the Defence Services Command and Staff Course (DSCSC), at the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur in Bangladesh in 2009. He is a distinguished alumnus of the University of Wollongong, New South Wales in Australia where he completed the Master of Maritime Policy Programme in 2019. In 2022, he completed the National Security & Strategic Studies Course at the National Defence College, Colombo. In addition, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Management Studies and a Master's degree in Business Administration in Human Resources Management from the Open University of Sri Lanka.

With a career spanning over 34 years, he has gained extensive experience at sea, commanding various craft, ships and shore establishments, including seven (7) afloat and three (3) ashore assignments. He has also served two terms as an Instructing Officer at the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), and Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sapugaskanda. He has held several key positions, including Deputy Director Naval Training, Training Captain at the Naval and Maritime Academy,

Head of the Training Team at the Defence Services Command and Staff College in Sapugaskanda, Director Naval Training and Acting Director General Training at the Navy Headquarters (NHQ). The senior officer, who has successfully led four naval commands; Southeastern (Panama), North Central (Talaimannar), Northern (Kankesanthurai), and Eastern (Trincomalee), took on the role of Chief of Staff on 16th August 2024. He was appointed as the 26th Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy by His Excellency the President effective from 31st December 2024.

The senior naval officer has been awarded with the Rana Sura Padakkama (RSP), Uththama Sewa Padakkama (USP) and a bunch of other service medals in recognition of his bravery, impeccable character and dedication to the service. Additionally, his efforts have been commended by the Commander of the Navy for successfully apprehending multiple narcotic consignments and three vessels along with their crews during high seas operations conducted by SLNS Sayurala.

Vice Admiral Kanchana Banagoda serves as an Associated Fellow in the Nautical Institute (UK) and has been appointed as a Justice of Peace (Whole Island). When he is not navigating maritime matters, the senior officer enjoys a variety of pursuits, including racket games, travel, exploration, photography, reading and music. He is married to Anusha and blessed with a daughter and a son.

Introduction of the Theme of the Conference

Rear Admiral Damian Fernando, RSP, USP, rcds, MSc(DS) Mgt, MA in IS&S(UK), AFNI, JP (WI)

Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Navy



RAAdm Damian Fernando, who is a proud product of St. Joseph Vaz College, joined the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) as an Officer Cadet to the 21st Intake on 12th September 1991 and successfully completed his basic naval training at the Naval and Maritime Academy (NMA) and commissioned as Acting Sub Lieutenant on 12th September 1993.

He followed the Sub Lieutenant Technical Course in NMA and achieved the first in order of merit. He is specialized in the fields of Gunnery and Missiles at the premier Naval Gunnery and Missiles Training School of Indian Navy; INS Dronacharya and obtained the 'Best All - Round Officer' trophy. He was one of the key members of the pioneering team that introduced missiles to the SLN Fleet. He successfully completed the Engineer course focused on Naval Gun Maintenance in China. Moreover, he has successfully completed the training at Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS); the most prestigious Defence Academy of United Kingdom and awarded with post- nominal 'rcds'.

He holds Masters of Science Degree in Management (Defence Studies) from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. Further, he completed Master of Arts in International Security and Strategy from the King's College London. He is a distinguished Alumni of Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies at Hawaii-Honolulu and elected to the grade of Associate Fellow at the Nautical Institute (UK). Further, he has completed the United States Navy's Flag Level Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) Course conducted by US Naval War College.

RAAdm Damian Fernando currently serves as the Chief of Staff of the SLN. His distinguished career includes several key appointments, such as Naval Armament Officer at the Naval Armament Department in SLN Dockyard, Deputy Director of Naval Weapons at Naval Headquarters, Commander - 4th Fast

Attack Flotilla, the most distinguished fighting flotilla in the SLN, Commandant of the NMA, the premier naval training institute of the SLN, Director General Personnel at Navy Headquarters and the Commander North Central Naval Area. Upon completion of serving as the Commander Eastern Naval Area and Deputy Chief of Staff of SLN, he assumed duties of the current appointment. Throughout his service, he has commanded various Fast Attack Craft, Fast Gun Boats, and the Offshore Patrol Vessel SLNS Samudura, in addition to serving on multiple other ships.

RAdm Damian Fernando has been decorated with Rana Sura Padakkama, Uththama Seva Padakkama and ten other Service Medals for his act of gallantry and meritorious service. He is a recipient of Commander of the Navy's Commendation Badge with 5 stars for the 6 commendations received from different Commanders of the Navy for his dedicated voluntary contribution and performances. He excelled in sports and represented SLN Cricket team.

RAdm Damian Fernando is married to Mrs. Kaushalya Opatha Fernando and blessed with two daughters Kalsha, Cecilia and a son, Febian.

Adm (Prof.) JSK Colombage (Retd.)



Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage has served the Sri Lanka Navy for a period of 36 years and retired as the Chief of the Navy, a four-star Admiral on 01 July 2014

He is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College in India and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK. He holds a PhD from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (Sri Lanka). He also holds an MSc on Defense and Strategic Studies from Madras University and an MA on International Studies from Kings College, London.

Admiral Colombage is a Guest Professor at Sichuan University and a visiting lecturer at Shenzhen University in China. Admiral has conducted lectures to National Defence Colleges, Command and Staff Colleges and universities in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. He has been a guest lecturer at many universities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Admiral has also been an examiner for PhD programme at University of Colombo and Kotelawala Defence University. Admiral has participated in a number of track 1.5 and track 2 dialogues in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Japan, Germany, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka.

He has served as the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka, Director at Centre for Indo-Lanka Initiatives at Pathfinder Foundation and Chairman of Sri Lanka Shipping Corporation as well.

Admiral Colombage was the Additional Secretary to the President for International Relations and Secretary to the Foreign Ministry from August 2020 to May 2022. Admiral Colombage has served as the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Indonesia and ASEAN until the end of 2024.

Admiral Colombage is a distinguished fellow of Pathfinder Foundation of Sri Lanka and Fellow of Nautical Institute in London.



Adm Dinesh K Tripathi

CNS- India

Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi assumed command as the 26th Chief of Naval Staff on 30 Apr 24. Prior to this appointment, he was the Vice Chief of Naval Staff.

He is an alumnus of Sainik School Rewa, and the prestigious National Defence Academy. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jul 1985 and specialised in Communication and Electronic Warfare. His command assignments include command of INS Vinash (Missile Vessel), INS Kirch (Missile Corvette), and INS Trishul (Guided Missile Frigate). Whilst in command of INS Kirch, he played a pivotal role during HADR operations after the Tsunami of Dec 2004, for which he received a letter of appreciation from the then President of Sri Lanka.

His other sea-going appointments include Executive Officer of INS Mumbai (Guided Missile Destroyer), Fleet Electronic Warfare Officer, Fleet Communication Officer as also the Fleet Operations Officer (akin to the Chief of Staff to the Fleet Commander) of the Western Fleet. His staff appointments include the Director of Naval Operations (DNO), Principal Director of Network Centric Operations (PDNCO), and Principal Director Naval Plans (PDNP).

After his promotion to the Flag Rank, he was appointed as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy and Plans), Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, Commandant of the prestigious Indian Naval Academy, Director General of Naval Operations, Chief of Personnel and the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command.

Such diverse range of sea and staff appointments have enabled him to grasp the nuances of plans, operations, personnel and practically every aspect of Indian Navy's functioning.

The Admiral is a graduate of Defence Service Staff College, Wellington, where he was awarded the Thimmaiya Medal for being the best all-round officer. The Admiral attended the Naval Higher Command Course and Naval Command College at the US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in 2007-08, where he won the Prestigious Robert E. Bateman International Prize.

The Admiral is a recipient of the Param Vishist Seva Medal, Ati Vishist Seva Medal and Nao Sena Medal for devotion to duty.

He is a keen sportsman and avidly follows tennis, badminton, and cricket. The Admiral is a student of International Relations, Military History, and the art and science of Leadership. He is married to Mrs Shashi Tripathi, an artist and homemaker. The couple have a son, Divyam, a practising lawyer, who is married to Tanya, who works in the public health policy domain.

Adm VLADIMIR M.VOROBEV
Deputy CinC- Russian Navy



He was born on January 6, 1969 in the family of a naval officer.

In 1990, after graduating from the navigation faculty of the Leninsky Komsomol Higher Naval Diving School, he was sent to the Northern Fleet. During his 11 years of service on nuclear submarines, He rose from Lieutenant engineer of the group to Captain of the 1st rank – Commander of the ship.

From 2001 to 2003 he studied at the Naval Academy named after Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union N.G.Kuznetsov in St. Petersburg. Then he returned to the Northern Fleet as Deputy Commander of the unit.

He served as Commander of the nuclear submarine division, Deputy Commander of the submarine squadron, Chief of Staff of the Base, Head of the Combat Training Department of the Northern Fleet and Commander of the White Sea Naval Base. After graduating from the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in 2019, he was appointed First Deputy Fleet Commander – Chief of Staff of the Baltic Fleet, and then headed the Headquarters of the Northern Fleet.

In the fall of 2021, he was appointed Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, and two years later He was appointed Commander of the Baltic Fleet.

From June 2024 to the present, he holds the position of Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Navy.

He was awarded orders, state and departmental medals. On December 9, 2024, he was awarded the regular military rank of Admiral. Married.



RAdm Hugues Lainé

Joint Commander of the French Forces in the United Arab Emirates
Joint Commander of the French Forces in the Indian Ocean
French National Contingent Commander of OIR operation

Rear-admiral Lainé was born in 1972 in Montluçon. He joined the French naval academy in 1992. After completion of training deployment on board the helicopter-carrier *Jeanne d'Arc*, he specialized in surface warfare.

He served notably onboard patrol-boat *La Glorieuse* based in New-Caledonia French oversea territory, ASW destroyer *Jean de Vienne*, ASW destroyer *Montcalm*, helicopter-carrier *Jeanne d'Arc* and air defence destroyer *Forbin*.

He was deployed three times onboard aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* as staff officer and twice as chief of staff of the carrier strike group.

He has commanded the training-ship *Tigre*, the stealth frigate *Surcouf* and the air defence destroyer *Chevalier Paul*.

Ashore he served as above surface warfare officer at the Navy surface component command, staff officer next to the general inspector for the joint chief of staff and responsible of leading the development of combat capabilities in the aeromarine domain at the Joint Staff.

In May 2022, he joined the military cabinet of French armed forces minister.

In August 2024, he was appointed as Joint Commander of the French Forces deployed in the Indian Ocean, Joint Commander of the French Forces stationed in the United Arab Emirates and French National Contingent Commander of OIR operation.

Dr. Huang Yunsong

Deputy Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, and Coordinator of the China Centre for South Asian Studies at Sichuan University



Dr. Huang Yunsong is a distinguished academic in the field of international studies, currently serving as a Professor and Associate Dean at the School of International Studies, Deputy Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, and Coordinator of the China Center for South Asian Studies at Sichuan University. His rich international experience is evidenced by the research scholarships he has held in Pakistan, India, and the United States. Notably, he conducted postdoctoral research in international law at the renowned University of Michigan Law School, further deepening his expertise in legal and academic arenas.

Dr. Huang's research interests are multi - faceted and strategically significant. His work predominantly focuses on China's diplomacy, South Asian studies, international relations, and international law. His current research projects, which are of great academic and practical value, include exploring means to enhance regional cooperation in the Asia - Pacific, analyzing the complex dynamics of China - South Asia relations, and delving into China's role in safeguarding maritime security and prosperity in the IOR. These projects not only contribute to academic discourse but also provide valuable insights for policy - making.

In addition to his academic and research roles, Dr. Huang actively engages in professional associations. He is a member of the council of the China National Association for International Studies, an executive member of the council of the People's Republic of China Association for Diplomatic History Studies, and an executive member of the council of the Chinese Association for South Asian Studies. Through these positions, he plays an important part in promoting academic exchanges and the development of relevant research fields in China. His contributions have made him a respected figure in the realm of international studies, especially in South Asian studies context, where his work continues to shape and influence both academic and policy - oriented discussions.

**Prof. Ronán Long**

Director, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

Professor Ronán Long is the Director of the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute (<https://www.wmu.se/goi>) at the World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmö, Sweden.

Professor Long leads the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute team that engages in interdisciplinary research and is an interface between science, policy, and law to address contemporary challenges in ocean governance and the Law of the Sea. Faculty, staff and students at the Institute undertake evidence-based research, as well as educational and capacity-development training, with a focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Particularly Goal 14, Life Below Water, as well as Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Goal 13 on Climate Action and Goal 17 on Partnerships. The Institute's work includes substantive contributions to international processes including the ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, the UN World Ocean Assessment, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), as well as the development of a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme. The research programmes 2024 to 2028 focuses on the future of ocean governance and ways to combat the triple planetary crisis. The Institute also provides support to small island developing states' (SIDS) and coastal least developed countries (LDCs) in their efforts to ratify and implement the BBNJ Agreement. The research explores the establishment of a unified framework to unlock the full potential of ocean technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in observing and monitoring deep ocean ecosystems, as well as gender empowerment and diversity.

Prof. Long is the author/co-editor of more than 15 books and over 100 scholarly articles on oceans law and policy. He read for his PhD at the School of Law Trinity College Dublin, and has been a Senior Visiting Scholar-in-Residence at the University

Prof. Ronán Long

Director, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

of California, Berkeley, and a Visiting Scholar at the 'Centre for Oceans Law and Policy' at the University of Virginia. Additionally, Professor Long teaches on the Law of the Sea programme at Harvard Law School, Rhodes Academy Oceans Law and Policy, as well as supervises the United Nations - The Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme visiting WMU.

Prior to his academic career, he was a permanent staff member at the European Commission and undertook over 40 missions on behalf of the European Institutions to the Member States of the European Union, the United States of America, Canada, Central America as well as to African countries. During his previous career in the Irish Naval Service, he won an academic prize at Britannia Royal Naval College and held a number of appointments ashore and afloat, including membership of the Navy's elite diving unit.

As a keen yachtsman, he has represented Ireland at the top competitive level in offshore racing. Ronán is passionate about the law of the sea, conservation and global sustainability, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



RAdm. Brett Sonter

Commander, JATF Operation Sovereign Borders

Rear Admiral Brett Sonter, Royal Australian Navy, assumed command as Commander Joint Agency Task Force – Operation Sovereign Borders on 10 January 2024.

Rear Admiral Sonter was born in Sydney and joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1990. After three years at the Australian Defence Force Academy, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of New South Wales. He also holds a Master of Arts (Strategy and Policy) from the University of New South Wales and a Master of Science (Strategy) from the U.S. National Defence University.

His career as a Principal Warfare Officer includes postings in Her Majesty's Australian (HMA) Ships Newcastle, Stuart, and Darwin as the Executive Officer. Highlights of his time at sea have been his Commands of HMA Ships Ballarat, Stuart and Anzac, and as the Commander of the Australian Amphibious Task Group; the later assignment resulting in him being appointed as the Commander of Joint Task Force 635 tasked with providing HADR to Fiji following Tropical Cyclone Winston.

His shore postings to date include: a Divisional Officer at the Australian Defence Force Academy; Headquarters Joint Operations Command; the Assistant Director Naval Officers' Postings; in the Middle-East team within Military Strategic Commitments; the Director of Maritime Operations; the Deputy Commodore of Warfare in Fleet Headquarters, the Director General Military Strategy in Strategic Policy Division, Chief of Staff to Headquarters Joint Operations Command, and most recently as the Deputy Director, Maritime Operations of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

RAdm Faisal Amin COMCOATS, PN



Rear Admiral Faisal Amin HI (M) S Bt joined Pakistan Navy as a Cadet in 1989 and got commissioned in 1992. He is a Surface Warfare Specialist with Qualification of Principal Warfare Officer. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta, National Defence University Islamabad and Royal College of Defence Studies UK.

During his illustrious career, the Rear Admiral has held diversified appointments. Some important ones include Naval Secretary at Naval Headquarters Islamabad, Principal Warfare Officer and Executive Officer of a Type-21 Frigate, Executive Officer of 2 x Mine Hunters, Command of a Gun Boat and Senior Staff Officer to COMAUXMIN-9. He also commanded PNS ALAMGIR; only OHP Class Frigate of Pakistan Navy. He has also performed duties of Commander 18th Destroyer Squadron and Commander Surface Task Group-1. His appointments at Naval Headquarters include Director Naval Operations, Director Naval Development Plans, Principal Secretary to Chief of Naval Staff and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Operations). The Rear Admiral has also performed the duties of Additional Secy-III at Ministry of Defence. He has also served as instructor at Pakistan Naval Academy and UAE Naval College Abu Dhabi from 2003-2006.

Rear Admiral Faisal Amin is a recipient of HI (M), S Bt and is presently serving as Commander Coast at Karachi.



Cdr (ASW) APA Prasanga
Sri Lanka Navy

Commanding Officer – Sri Lanka Naval Ship Prathapa
Senior Naval Officer | Maritime Security Scholar | Indo-Pacific Strategist

Professional Summary

Commander Amila Prasanga is a senior officer in the Sri Lanka Navy with over two decades of operational command and scholarly expertise. Currently commanding Sri Lanka Naval Ship Prathapa, a Fast Gunboat attached to the Southern Naval Command. With over 20 years of service, he integrates operational command experience with strategic scholarship to advance Indo-Pacific maritime security.

Key Operational Experience

- Commanded Fast Attack Craft, Fast Passenger Ship, Gunboats.
- Led specialized units: Rapid Action Boat Squadron (RABS) and Rapid Response Rescue & Relief Squadron (4RS).
- Extensive service in counter-terrorism operations, maritime security missions, and humanitarian assistance at sea.

Strategic & Academic Contributions

- Military Research Officer, Institute of National Security Studies, Ministry of Defence.
- Research focus: Naval Strategy, Non-Traditional Security, Climate Change, Counter-Human Trafficking.
- Published in leading journals and think tanks; contributor to Center for International Maritime Security (CIMSEC).
- Winner – Indian Ocean Naval Symposium International Academic Essay Competition (2022).

Education

- Graduate, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.
- Graduate, Defence Services Command & Staff College, Sri Lanka.
- Bachelor's Degree in Management & Technical Sciences.
- Three Master's Degrees: Conflict & Peace Studies | Defence & Strategic Studies | Business Administration.

International Engagements

- Represented Sri Lanka Navy in professional exchanges, training, and dialogues with India, United States, Japan, Korea, and China.
- Active Member – Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars.

Core Competencies

- Maritime Security & Naval Operations
- Strategic Analysis & Policy Development
- Counter-Terrorism & Non-Traditional Threats
- Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response
- Regional & International Maritime Cooperation



Wg Cdr Gayan Bowatte

Sri Lanka Air Force

Wing Commander PGGK Bowatte is a highly esteemed officer in the Sri Lanka Air Force with a distinguished career marked by leadership and expertise in aviation. Born in Kalutara, he received his early education at Gnanodaya College and Mahanama College before joining the Sri Lanka Air Force as an Officer Cadet in 2004. He holds a B.Sc. in Management and Technical Sciences from Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), an M.Sc. in GIS and RS from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura, and an M.Sc. in Defence and Strategic Studies also from KDU. He honed his flying skills through rigorous training, including basic and advanced flying courses on PT-6 and K-8 aircraft, and further developed his instructional capabilities by completing the Qualified Flying Instructor's course in China. Throughout his service, he has held key appointments, including an operational pilot and a flying instructor, and he also served as a Military Staff Officer for a United Nations peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA), where he earned a commendation for his exemplary service.

A dedicated professional, Wing Commander Bowatte has made significant contributions to the Sri Lanka Air Force, particularly in his role as a Qualified Flying Instructor. He has been instrumental in training numerous student pilots, who have since gone on to serve the nation with distinction. His commitment to the force is further highlighted by his past role as Officer Commanding Flying (OCF) at the No. 1 Flying Training Wing at SLAF Academy China Bay. He currently serves as Officer Commanding Operations (OC Ops) at the No. 3 Maritime Squadron, a vital unit responsible for safeguarding Sri Lanka's maritime interests and vast exclusive economic zone. Married to Anuradha, an Associate Professor at SLIIT, and a father of one, Wing Commander Bowatte's career reflects a commitment to service, education, and the advancement of aviation within his country.

SESSION 2

Moderator

Professor Quentin Hanich

Fisheries Governance Programme Leader, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS)



Professor Quentin Hanich

- Fisheries Governance Programme Leader
- Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Research Chair
- IOTC Allocation Committee Chair
- Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), University of Wollongong

Professor Quentin Hanich leads the Fisheries Governance Research Programme at the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), University of Wollongong, where he is a Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Research Chair. He has established various international research partnerships focusing on ocean governance and equity, marine conservation, and the sustainable and equitable management of transboundary fisheries. He is particularly interested in strategic research and capacity building projects that strengthen cooperation and consensus building. With this goal in mind, he engages closely with governments, stakeholders and international fora, and develops collaborative studies and capacity building programmes that address current and future ocean governance and policy challenges.

In addition to his roles at the University of Wollongong, Professor Hanich was elected in 2024 to chair the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's allocation committee. He is also a Principal Investigator in the Nippon Foundation funded Ocean Nexus Programme, a research partner with the Japanese Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA), Korean Maritime Institute (KMI), and the Solomon Islands National University. He is also a member of the United Nations Pool of Experts for the World Ocean Assessments #2 and #3.

He lectures and writes on oceans governance, international fisheries, marine conservation, and fisheries development in the Asia Pacific region, and is a regular peer reviewer for numerous globally respected journals. He has assessed PhDs for multiple Universities, and research and development proposals for the Australian Research Council, the World Bank, the Australian Aid Programme, the New Zealand Aid Programme, and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

Prof. Hanich has developed and taught undergraduate and post-graduate subjects, post-graduate courses, and professional short courses on international negotiations, fisheries

Professor Quentin Hanich

Fisheries Governance Programme Leader, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS)

management, and ocean governance. He regularly lectures to professional and post-graduate audiences on oceans governance, fisheries governance and development, and is regularly invited to speak at international conferences.

Related appointments

- 2024 onwards: IOTC Allocation Committee Chair
- 2020 onwards: Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus Chair
- 2017 onwards: Nippon Foundation Nereus/Ocean Nexus Principal Investigator
- 2016 onwards: United Nations Pool of Experts for Ocean Assessment
- 2012 onwards: Fisheries Governance Programme Leader. ANCORS/University of Wollongong
- 2019 – 2024: Editor-in-Chief Marine Policy (previously Associate Editor 2018-2019)
- 2009 - 2014: Consultant then Technical Advisor to the Australian Aid Programme (AusAID)
- 2013 – 2018: Consultant/Technical Advisor to the World Bank
- 2006 - 2012: Research Fellow. ANCORS/University of Wollongong

Education

- PhD with Special Commendation. ANCORS/University of Wollongong. Thesis: 'Interest and Influence – Conservation and Management in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.'
- Bachelor of Antarctic Studies with Honours (First Class). Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies. University of Tasmania. Thesis: 'Enforcement and Compliance Challenges to the Management of the Heard and McDonald Islands Fisheries.'
- Bachelor of Arts (Major in Politics). La Trobe University.

International Negotiations, Facilitation and Consensus Building

Prof. Hanich has worked in the field of international fisheries negotiations for 20 years. His research and capacity building has focused on cooperation and consensus building to support sustainability and equity goals. He has worked in a variety of roles for government, non-government and inter-governmental organisations; including technical advisory roles to the governments of Australia, Niue, Palau and Kiribati where he has supported national delegations to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Since 2016, he has been working closely with Niue, Samoa,

Professor Quentin Hanich

Fisheries Governance Programme Leader, Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS)

Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu to support their development of a new sub-regional initiative (South Pacific Group) to strengthen the cooperative management of the southern longline fisheries.

Prof. Hanich's research programme has observer status to the following RFMOs where his programme is actively engaged in collaborative research and capacity building projects:

- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)
- South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)

He has also chaired RFMO Committees (IOTC Allocation) and working groups (WCPFC Sharks WG, WCPFC CNM WG), facilitated inter-governmental workshops, advised various government delegations to international fora, represented governments in international negotiations and organized and chaired numerous international workshops.

Since 2011, Prof. Hanich has developed, coordinated and taught professional and post-graduate courses focusing on RFMO negotiation and advocacy. In recent years, these courses have expanded from their initial Pacific islands focus to also engage with Indian Ocean and South-East Asian governments, and now bring together experts from coastal States and distant water fishing States to collaboratively discuss and develop skills and expertise in developing States in the Pacific, South-East Asia and Indian Ocean regions.

Prof. Hanich has an extensive research and consulting track record, largely funded by research and development grants. He has written over 130 peer-reviewed papers, chapters and reports and regularly advises governments, intergovernmental and non-government organisations on transboundary fisheries and ocean governance. His research papers have been cited widely in development and governance reports and committees, academic literature, and media. He has a high citation factor of (H-index 33). His publication record can be viewed at: <https://scholar.google.com.au/citations?user=k1voHZkAAAAJ&hl=en>



Dr. Rafael Prado

The Nippon Foundation Lecturer on Global Ocean Governance IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI)

Education: Postdoc Researcher at the University College London (UCL), Doctor in Law with distinction from the University of Barcelona (UB), Spain and the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brazil, with a doctoral visiting researcher fellowship at the Department of International Law and International Organizations, Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva, Switzerland; Institute of Legal Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (IIJ- UNAM), University of Hamburg and Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law, and at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Master in Environment Law with distinction from the University of Tarragona “Rovira i Virgili (URV), Spain with a Visiting Research Fellowship at the University of Limoges, France. Certificate from the Hague Academy of International Law, The Netherlands, Diploma in International and Comparative Environmental Law by the Washington College of Law, American University, U.S. Diploma in International Law and Regional Development by the Interamerican Juridical Committee of the Organization of American States (OEA-OAS), Bachelor in Juridical Sciences by the Communitarian University of the Region of Joinville, Santa Catarina, Brazil with an interchange programme at the University of Minho, Portugal.

Professional Qualification: Advocate, Brazilian Bar Association (OAB)

Distinctions, Prizes, and Scholarships: The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), The Kingdom of Spain, Basque Country and Catalonia Government Master’s Scholarship, The Hague Academy of International Law, The Swiss Confederation Award Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists of the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS), The American University Scholarship (USA), The Organization of American States (OEA)-OAS), and The International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS).

Research Interests: Global Oceans Governance, International environmental law, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MAE), International Dispute Settlement, ITLOS and ICJ, Law and Technology, Climate Change, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), IUU-Fisheries, Indigenous and Traditional Populations and Blue economy and circular economy.

Languages of work: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian

Professional Experience: The Nippon Foundation Lecturer on Global Ocean Governance, IMO-IMLI. External Examiner at the University of Malta, University of Sao Paulo, and University of Seville. Researcher (Postdoc) at the University College London (UCL), Islands Laboratory, The Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources, Project of a new socio-juridical data methodology for disaster risk reduction and resilience, in the face of climate change and sea level rise to inform local decision-makers in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Lusophony

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University of Oporto, Faculty of Law, Portugal, Visiting Professor of the Graduate Programme in Law and Public Policy. The Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea (NILOS) Moot Court Judge. UNESCO Chair on Sustainability at the Polytechnical University of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona, Spain, Lecturer and researcher fellow of environmental law and sustainability related to Law and Technology. International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), Hamburg, Germany, intern and temporary staff under the direction of the Register. Founder-member and academic council member of the Center of Studies in Law of the Sea Judge Vicente Marotta-Rangel (CEDMAR), University of São Paulo (USP). International Law Center (CEDIN) Brazil, responsible for environmental cases at ICJ under the project: The Jurisprudence of the ICJ and ITLOS, translation from the ICJ official languages to Portuguese. Co-organizer of the III and IV International Congress of the Sea: “The Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment” at the University Lusíada of Lisbon, Portugal. Co-Chair of the Permanent Seminar of the Mexican Yearbook of International Law at the Institute of Legal Research (II) National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), responsible for the International Environmental Law and Law of the Sea fields. United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, responsible for the preparation of reports and analysis for the UN Programme for Environment (UNEP), UN Human Rights Council, and UN Programme for Development (UNDP) on human rights and environmental issues such as right to food, health and environment, climate change, energy, and vulnerable populations rights. Participated in the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council through the Capacity Building and Training Programme for Lawyers of the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva: International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) research fellow, Ontario and Quebec, Canada.

Memberships: Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), Brazilian Academy of International Law (ABDI), The Spanish Association of Professors of International Law and International Relations (AEPDIRI), European Society of International Law (ESIL), Centre of Studies and Research in Law of the Sea “Vicente Marotta Rangel” at the University of São Paulo (CEDMAR-USP), Maritime Law Academy, Brazil, UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC). Academic Council of United Nations System (ACUNS). International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea Alumni Association. Editorial Board at the Brazilian Yearbook of International Law (Anuário Brasileiro de Direito Internacional) and Boletim de Direito Internacional. International Law Association (ILA) Brazilian Branch. Advisory Board of Revista de Direito Ambiental - RDA (Brazilian Environmental Law Journal), Thomson Reuters Revista dos Tribunais, São Paulo, Brazil. Member of Centro de Estudos em Direito Internacional (CEDIN) / International Law Center. Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The World League of Environmental Lawyers (Liga Mundial de Abogados Ambientalistas, LIMAA, Mexico). Advisory Editorial Member of “Revista Derecho Sin Fronteras. Lerni Instrui”. Latin American Society of International Law (Sociedad Latinoamericana de Derecho Internacional,

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SLADI). Revista de la Secretaría del Tribunal Permanente de Revisión del MERCOSUR (RSTPR). Editorial Board Revista de Direito Internacional / Brazilian Journal of International Law), Centro Universitário de Brasília (UNICEUB. The Mexican Yearbook of International Law (Anuario Mexicano de Derecho Internacional, AMDI). Association of The Brazilian Researchers and Students in Catalonia (APEC). Member of the Brazilian Academy of International Law (Academia Brasileira de Direito Internacional, ABDI). The Association of Attendees and Alumni of The Hague Academy of International Law (AAA).

Publications: Mara Tignino and Rafael Prado, “The role of amicus curiae in the ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change and International Law, *ESIL Reflections* 13:4 (2024). A Corte Internacional de Justicia e o Meio Ambiente (2021), Arraes Editores, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Contribution of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge to Urban Resilience. Berlin: Springer. The UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses. A Commentary. Oxford Commentaries on International Law Serie. Edited by Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, Makane Moïse Mbengue, Mara Tignino, Komlan Sangbana, and Assistant Editor Jason Rudall. Oceans governance and the Law of the Sea in the Anthropocene: Contemporary Challenges for the ITLOS about marine life resources. Environmental Domestic and International Litigation. Marine pollution by plastics, and the challenge of its international control by the Law of the Sea. In: Law of the Sea and Transdisciplinarity, Centre of Research and Studies on Law of the Sea “Vicente Marotta Rangel”, University of São Paulo (CEDMAR-USP). Emergency of communitarian resilience and biocultural heritage: encounters and disagreements with environmental concerns. “Commentary of Article 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966, and in force from 23 March 1976”. Cap. 17. The obligation to cooperate in the management of international hydrographic basins: The case of the Albufeira Agreement between Spain and Portugal. Lessons from / for Latin America on exploitation and management of shared water resources in the practice of the International Court of Justice). The dispute settlement system under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the jurisdiction of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Derecho Internacionalmente comparado del medio ambiente: temas actuales. (International and Comparative Environment Law: current issues) (Colección Lex). Barcelona: Huygens Editorial. International legal protection of human displacement forced by environmental causes. Protection of the environment and its relation to the right to health in the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Challenges of international environmental law: the performance of the International Court of Justice (CIJ) in the face of “international environmental disputes”.

Mr. Vijay D Chafekar

Executive Director, ReCAAP ISC &
Former A/DG of ICG (Retd.)



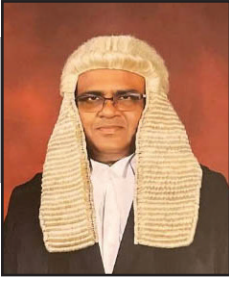
Mr Vijay D Chafekar, Additional Director General (Retd), Indian Coast Guard, is an experienced seafarer who has served on and commanded different classes of coast guard ships in his 37 years of distinguished service. He previously headed the Policy & Plans Division at Indian Coast Guard Headquarters, and steered the formulation of long-term plans to drive organisational growth and the effective discharge of coast guard statutory functions.

A trained pilot, he has considerable flying experience, operating coast guard Dornier aircrafts on the eastern and western seaboard of India. He also holds the distinction of commissioning the largest advanced coast guard offshore patrol vessel ‘Samrat’, and heading prestigious and sensitive coast guard functions on the western seaboard of India.

Mr Chafekar is a distinguished graduate of the Naval Staff College in New Port, USA, and has participated in the Naval Higher Command Course in 2008. He holds an M.Sc. & M.Phil. in Defence and Strategic Studies, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Maritime Law.

Mr Chafekar has represented the Indian Coast Guard at various national and international forums on transnational crimes, maritime disaster response, maritime search & rescue and maritime law enforcement. He has the distinction of participating in the advanced International Security and Cooperation Programme at the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, Hawaii.

In recognition of his distinguished service, Mr Chafekar has been awarded the President Medal by the Indian government.



Mr. Vikum de Abrew

Deputy Solicitor General & President's Counsel,
AG Department- SL

Vikum de Abrew is an Additional Solicitor General at the Attorney General's Department of Sri Lanka, with thirty years of experience in litigation as a Counsel representing the State and other government-owned institutions in the Appellate and original Courts. He was conferred silk as President's Counsel in the year 2021.

He has represented the State and other institutions in domestic and international commercial arbitrations. He has represented Sri Lanka in bilateral discussions focusing on fisheries. He has also addressed national and international fora, sharing his expertise in maritime law and international legal frameworks. He served as Rapporteur at the 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th Sessions at UNCITRAL Working Group VI (Judicial Sale of Ships), contributing to the development and finalisation of the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships, which was adopted in 2022.

He holds two Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees: one from the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta, where he specialised in the Law of the Sea and Maritime Law, and another from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

He has authored a book on the Adequacy of the International Legal Regime on Ballast Water and has also published several articles on the Law of the Sea and Shipping Law.

He has contributed to national and regional legal development efforts as National Legal Consultant to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and International Consultant/Maritime Legal Expert to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime(UNODC).

Maj Gen Suzanne Puanani Vares-Lum (Retd.)
Director, Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies
(APCSS)]



Suzanne Puanani Vares-Lum became the director of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in January 2025. Prior to this role, she served as President of the East-West Center.

Born and raised in Hawaii, she served 34 years in all three components of the U.S. Army—the Army National Guard, Regular Army, and Army Reserve—retiring as a Major General in 2021.

In her last military assignment, Vares-Lum spent 5 ½ years at the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, where she served as the Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, including periods as acting Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander. As a Brigadier General, she served as the Mobilization Assistant to the J5, Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, U.S. Pacific Command.

Vares-Lum began her military career in 1986, enlisting in the Army Reserve as a private first class. She was later commissioned as a Distinguished Military Graduate in the Military Intelligence Corps through the University of Hawaii at Manoa ROTC programme and entered active duty in 1989 as a second lieutenant. She later returned to Hawaii and entered the Hawai'i Army National Guard.

Her previous assignments include Chief of Staff Hawai'i National Guard; Vice Chief of Staff and J2 Hawai'i National Guard; 298th Multifunctional Training Unit Regimental Commander; G-2, 29th Separate Infantry Brigade; 229th Military Intelligence Company Commander; 29th Support Battalion S-2; 103rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division HHSC Executive Officer; Trailblazer Platoon Leader, 103rd (CEWI) Military Intelligence Battalion, 3rd ID; 3rd ID Division Artillery Fire Support Intelligence Officer, and 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Public Affairs Officer.

Vares-Lum was mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III from August 2004 to March 2006. As the 29th Separate Infantry Brigade G-2, she established and led the Joint Intelligence Center in Balad, Iraq.

Her military schools include the Army Strategic Education Programme, Basic and Advanced, Army Forced Integration for Senior Leaders, the U.S. Army War College (DDE), Military Intelligence Officer Advanced Course, Military Officer Basic Course, Combined Arms and Services Staff School, Command and General Staff Officer's Course, Airborne School, and Air Assault School.

Vares-Lum serves on the Bank of Hawaii Board of Directors, as well as non-profit boards, including the Pacific International Center for High Technology Research and the Hawaii Army Museum. She is a current member of the U.S.-Japan Council and is a National Academy of Public Administration Fellow.

Maj Gen Suzanne Puanani Vares-Lum (Retd.)

Director, Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS)

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and her Master of Education in Teaching from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, as well as a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. In 2019, she became a National Security Fellow of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. She is also an alumna of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies' Transnational Security Cooperation course (TSC 16-2), the Senior Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (SEAPOC 15-1), and a participant in numerous workshops.

Her awards include the Defence Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, and other personal and unit awards. In 2017, she was a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and Army ROTC National Hall of Fame Inductee.

Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja

Visiting Senior Fellow at ODI Global in London and Former Executive Director of the Think Tank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka



Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja is a Visiting Senior Fellow at ODI Global in London and the Professorial Fellow in Economics and Trade at Gateway House in Mumbai. He holds a visiting appointment at the National University of Singapore. Previously, he was Executive Director of Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry think tank, Advisor to the Sri Lankan President on Strategic Trade Policy, Director of Research at the ADB Institute and a Visiting Scholar at the IMF. He has a DPhil in economics from Oxford University and has published extensively on macroeconomics, trade and geopolitics.



Col Amanda Jhonston DA Australia in New Delhi

COL Amanda Johnston joined the Australian Army in 1993 and after completing a civil engineering degree at the Australian Defence Force Academy and the officer entry course at Royal Military College Duntroon, graduated into the Royal Australian Engineer corps.

Her appointments as a junior officer included Troop and Squadron command, Operations Officer at Regiment and Brigade level and training instructor at the School of Military Engineering and Royal Military College Duntroon. COL Johnston has also held a number of staff roles at Army Headquarters, most recently Director Preparedness in Land Operations Branch.

In 2014 COL Johnston assumed command of the 6th Engineer Support Regiment, and during her command tenure, the Regiment delivered vital support to four aboriginal communities, disposed of tonnes of World War II munitions from Bougainville as part of Operation Render Safe, and participated in many other domestic and international activities.

COL Johnston's operational deployments include United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor in 2004, and United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in Israel, Syria and Lebanon in 2006, during which she received a Chief of Joint Operations Gold Commendation in recognition of her conduct during the Israel-Hezbollah conflict. In 2010 she deployed on Operation Slipper in Afghanistan, where she was a Demobilisation Officer in the Force Reintegration Cell in Kabul, and in 2019 she returned to Afghanistan as Commander of the Kabul Garrison Command Advisor Team (rotation 6) for Operation Highroad.

COL Johnston holds a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) and a Master of Arts (International Relations), and is a graduate of Australian Command and Staff College (2008), and National Defence College, New Delhi (2023). In recognition of her service at AHQ, she was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross (2014) and Bar (2023).

In December 2023 she assumed her current appointment as Australian Defence Adviser to Sri Lanka and Maldives.

COL Johnston is an avid traveller and has a keen interest in all water-sports. In 2017 she was fortunate to take a two year break to sail around South East Asia on her yacht, which gave her plenty of opportunity to do both!

Major General R.A.J. (Rob) de Wit

Netherlands Marine Corps Deputy Commander
Royal Netherlands Navy



Rob de Wit - born March 10th 1972 in Snelrewaard in the Netherlands – joined the Royal Netherlands Naval Academy in Den Helder in 1990 as a midshipman for the Netherlands Marine Corps. After a successful completion of the academy in 1995 he was commissioned as first lieutenant and appointed to command an infantry platoon within the 1st Marine battalion. After one year he moved to the Marine Training Wing, training Marine recruits. Directly after this he became the Mortar Officer of the 2nd Marine battalion.

In 1997 he was promoted to captain and became the companies 2nd in command of the key-company of the 1st Marine battalion, the 11th Parachute company. With this unit he was deployed to Kosovo as a part of NATO's Strategic Reserve Forces. In 2001 he left the company to attend the USMC Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, USA. In 2002 he returned from the US to conduct the Captains Close Support Course in Larkhill, UK. After successful completion of this course he became an artillery observer within the NLMC.

In 2003 he was promoted to major and became the Amphibious Operations Officer on board of HNLMS Rotterdam, a RNLN LPD. With this warship he went to Liberia in 2003 under UN command. In 2005 he moved to the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) within the Netherlands armed forces. Within DMO he became a project leader of the Soldier Modernisation Programme .

In 2008 he was appointed company commander of the 13th company (Special Operations Capable), 1st Marine battalion. In the winter of 2009 he was appointed CO NLD Detachment Chad. When he returned from Chad he moved back to the 13th company SOC in order to prepare for operations in Uruzgan, Afghanistan in 2010. With his company he took part in combat operations in Uruzgan.

After return to the Netherlands he was appointed lecturer on Amphibious Warfare at the Netherlands Defence Academy as part of the branch Military Operational Science. In July 2013 he went to the United States to attend the Naval Command Course (NCC 14) at the Naval War College.

On completion of this course, he was appointed commanding officer of the 2nd Marine Combat Group (2MCG). in July 2014. After a successful tour of battalion commander he

Major General R.A.J. (Rob) de Wit
Netherlands Marine Corps Deputy Commander
Royal Netherlands Navy

was appointed senior staff officer at the Plans Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence.

In 2019 he was promoted to colonel as the head of the strategy department of the Royal Netherlands Navy. In 2020 he became the Group-commander of the Operational Units of the Netherlands Marine Corps. In 2023 he went to Erbil, Iraq as teamleader of the Joint Operational Command Advisory Team of Operation Inherent Resolve. As teamleader he assisted the Kurdish Armed Forces to build and train their army. In February 2024 De Wit was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned Director of Business Management & Governance at the Royal Netherlands Navy. In August 2025 he was promoted to Major General to become the Deputy Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy.

Rob de Wit is married with Carolien, together they have two daughters; Fleur (2007) and Merel (2008). His personal interests include swimming, pistol target shooting and professional reading.

Comde Ben Aldous RN

United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander &
Deputy Commander Combined Maritime Forces



Commodore Aldous joined the Royal Navy as a Warfare Officer in 1998 with a Law Degree from Southampton University. Following initial training at BRNC Dartmouth his early career

spanned Officer of the Watch and Navigator appointments in MCMVs, Frigates and Destroyers, including operations off Iraq in 2003. He completed the PWO Course in 2006 as a PWO(A) and joined HMS WESTMINSTER as the Gunnery Officer and later as the Operations Officer, prior to Command selection for an appointment as Executive Officer of HMS SOMERSET in 2010.

Aldous attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) in 2013/14 before being selected for promotion to Commander and for Sea Command, whereupon he assumed Command of the Type 23 Frigate, HMS IRON DUKE in February 2015. IRON DUKE was assigned to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) in 2016 and spent 6 months operating with the Group off Norway and in the Baltic Sea during a fascinating time of Russian activity.

With his sea time complete, Aldous took up the role of Assistant to the Second Sea Lord in Autumn 2016 acting as the principal advisor to the RN's 3* lead for Personnel, Training, Capability, Infrastructure and Finance. Aldous then moved to HMS COLLINGWOOD to assume the role of Officer Commanding Warfare Training where he developed a passion for Adult Learning and was recognised with a Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Promoted Captain in March 2020, Aldous conducted an OpTour to Bahrain as the Deputy Commander of the French-led CTF150 staff (Counter Piracy) just as COVID-19 began to dominate operations. He returned to the UK in the summer of 2020 to assume a role as ACOS (Operations) in the Standing Joint Force HQ in Northwood, before attending the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in 2021-22. A further OpTour to Bahrain followed as the 1* Commander of the International Maritime Security Construct in Bahrain, working directly for the US 3* Commander of Naval Central Command & Fifth Fleet, before taking up his last position in the UK MOD in 2023, orchestrating strategic effects in support of the MOD's Russia Campaign Team. Commodore Aldous assumed Command of the UK's Maritime Component in the Middle East in January 2025.

Commodore Aldous lives in Southsea, Hampshire, with his wife and two young daughters.

**Dr. David Brewster**

Australian National University (ANU)]

Dr David Brewster is one of Australia's leading experts on the Australia's security relationships in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. He is a Senior Research Fellow with the National Security College and a Distinguished Research Fellow with the Australia India Institute.

Dr Brewster's books include *India as an Asia Pacific power*, about India's strategic role in the Asia Pacific and *India's Ocean: the story of India's bid for regional leadership* which examines India's strategic ambitions in the Indian Ocean. His edited volumes include *India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean* and *Cross Currents: the New Geopolitics of the Indian Ocean*.

Some recent reports include:

- *Governing Bangladesh's maritime space: An assessment of Bangladesh's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*
- *Maritime Domain Awareness 3.0: The Future of Maritime Information and Intelligence Sharing in the Indian Ocean*
- *Governing Sri Lanka's maritime space: : An assessment of Bangladesh's maritime challenges and maritime domain awareness capabilities*

Dr Brewster regularly works on projects with assistance from the Australian government. His current projects include assessments for Bay of Bengal countries and examining regional MDA information sharing arrangements.

VAdm Anil Kumar Chawla, PVSM, AVSM, NM, VSM, PhD (Retd.)



Vice Admiral Chawla retired in November 2021 as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian Navy's (IN) Southern Command. In his four-decade long distinguished career, he commanded five warships, including an aircraft carrier and the IN's Western Fleet. He also headed the IN's Foreign Cooperation, Planning & Procurement, Operations and Human Resources Departments.

He completed his MA (Defence Studies) from King's College, London University and MPhil & PhD from Bombay University. An accomplished maritime thinker, author and commentator, he was responsible for drafting the IN's Maritime Strategy and has authored several other key capstone documents for the Indian Armed Forces.

He is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Rashtriya Raksha University, India, and on the board of several thinktanks in India and abroad. He is also a Consultant on Maritime Security with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). A prolific writer and speaker, his book titled "Maritime Power in China's Grand Strategy" was published to critical acclaim by Routledge in December 2024.

A multi-faceted personality, he is an avid environmentalist and was conferred the Golden Peacock Award Environmental Management Award in 2020. He is currently concurrently engaged in plastic waste management through his start-up, Swacharit India Pvt Ltd.

Cmde JMBSB Jayaweera, USP psc, MDS, MSC in Maritime Affairs

Sri Lanka Navy



Commodore Buddhika Jayaweera, joined the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) in October 1995 through the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) after concluding his secondary education at Central College, Welimada. At KDU he was conferred with Bachelor of Science (Defence Studies) degree with honours. He did his initial Naval training at Naval and Maritime Academy, Trincomalee and was commissioned in 1997.

He is qualified in Navigation. Further he has successfully completed Junior Naval Staff Course and passed Staff Course becoming First in Order of Merit and being the recipient of Golden Aul Award. Further he was conferred with a Master's Degree in Defence Studies from University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka and another Master's Degree in Maritime Affairs from World Maritime University, Sweden. Also he is a Post Graduate Diploma holder in International Relations and obtained diploma in Human Resource Management, Diploma in Business Management and Advanced Diploma in Liner Trade.

During his over 29 years of unblemished naval career, the officer has held numerous command, staff and instructor appointments. Currently, he performs as Deputy Area Commander, Eastern Naval Area. Prior to that he performed as the Deputy Area Commander, Eastern Naval Area, Director Naval Training and Deputy Director Naval Operations at Navy Headquarters. He commanded all classes+ of ships in Sri Lanka Navy. He also had served Sri Lanka Coast Guard in three occasions including a tenure as Director Operations and served as the Deputy General Manager at Marine Environment Protection Authority.

As an Instructor he served at the Naval and Maritime Academy and currently officiating as the Principal of Merchant Marine Training School of the Sri Lanka Navy. He is a regular visiting lecturer at Naval and Maritime Academy, Naval Fleet Command and Defence Services Command and Staff College in the subject area of Maritime Security, Safety and Law of the Sea.

. He has presented papers at international forums such as Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indo-Pacific Environmental Security Forum (IPESF), and published a few articles related to Maritime Security and Marine Environment Protection. Also he has done tremendous work in the successful maritime rescue operation of MT New Diamond which paved the way to avert one of the worst marine environment disasters that could have occurred in the IOR and rescue operations of MV X-Press Pearl and MSC Daniela. He is an Associate Fellow of Nautical Institute (AFNI) UK and member of Chartered Institute of Shipbrokers (MICS) UK.

Capt Wade Turvold (Retd.)

Dean Admissions and Business Operations, APCSS



Wade Turvold joined the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in June 2019 after a 30-year career in the U.S. Navy. He was privileged to serve in two educational assignments during this time, as the U.S. Navy Senior Service Representative and Director National Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College, and the U.S. Navy Exchange Directing Staff at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham, England.

He served as a Naval Flight Officer during his career and has extensive experience flying P-3C and P-8A aircraft. Mr. Turvold commanded Patrol Squadron FOUR in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and commanded Air Test and Evaluation Squadron ONE in Patuxent River, Maryland. His flying assignments, in addition to command, were in Patrol Squadron FORTY SEVEN in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in Patrol Squadron THIRTY in Jacksonville, Florida (two tours), and in Patrol Squadron SIX and Patrol Squadron NINE, both in Barbers Point, Hawaii. He also served as Officer in Charge of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Weapons Tactics Unit in Jacksonville, Florida.

His staff assignments were as Air Anti Submarine Operations Officer on the United States SIXTH Fleet staff embarked in USS LASALLE in Gaeta, Italy, and as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at Patrol and Reconnaissance Force, United States SEVENTH Fleet in Misawa, Japan.

Mr. Turvold graduated with Merit from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1989 where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree. He graduated with Distinction from the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, in 2000 where he earned a Master of Arts degree.

He completed numerous deployments throughout his career to the Indo-Pacific region, the Middle East, and to Europe. Mr. Turvold participated in combat operations in Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines. Mr. Turvold served in a faculty position prior to becoming the Dean of Admissions and Business operations.

Mr. Turvold's Publications:

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- Wade Turvold Participates in DSCA/Regional Centers Panel at Sea Air Space Conference
 - Conflict Scenarios Between the United States and China at Sea
 - DKI APCSS Professors Contribute to Book on Russia's Global Reach
 - U.S. Command and Control across the Spectrum of Gray-Zone Operations in the East China Sea
 - A Network of Maritime Fusion Centers Throughout the Indo-Pacific

**RAdm YN Jayarathna (Retd.)**

Rear Admiral YN Jayarathna retired from the Sri Lanka Navy in 2022 on reaching mandatory retirement age of 55 after an illustrious, battle decorated and unblemished career span of over 35 years. At the time of his retirement, he was the Chief of Staff and the Chief Hydrographer of the Navy, concurrently holding the appointment of the Joint Chief Hydrographer to the Government.

On retirement his expertise was secured by the United Nations and performed as an International Consultant to the UNODC on Undersea Cables and Maritime Intelligence.

He holds two Masters Degrees from the University of Kelaniya for Defence Studies (2001) and University of Goa, India for Hydrographic Surveys (2003). He is International Hydrographic Organization's Category 'A' Qualified Hydrographer with vast knowledge and experience on oceanic and maritime matters. He has authored several articles for publications on topics covering geo-politics to marine science research and is a regular visiting lecturer for the Think Tanks, Staff Colleges, and the National Defence College.

He speaks widely on contemporary geo-strategic maritime issues and the oceans and regularly writes to printed media and think-tanks on matters maritime. Please follow his profile in LinkedIn for his presentations, writings, and newsletters.

Brigadier General Mohamed Saleem,

Commandant, Coast Guard

Maldives National Defence Force, Republic of Maldives



Brigadier General Mohamed Saleem assumed the duties and responsibilities as the 12th Commandant of the MNDF Coast Guard in December 2023. He is the principal advisor to the Chief of the Defence Force of MNDF, focusing on ensuring training, equipping, operations and deploying a mission-capable maritime force for the Coast Guard's diverse roles in maritime security, humanitarian efforts, and maritime law enforcement. During his career to date, Brigadier General Saleem has held prominent appointments in the Coast Guard, both afloat and ashore. After completing a distinguished term at sea on various Coast Guard platforms, he has held strategic appointments at the Coast Guard Headquarters. Brigadier General Saleem has also held leadership appointments at operational area commands of the MNDF, serving as the Deputy Commander, MNDF Southern Area, and later as the Area Commander for MNDF Northern Area.

His academic and professional military education includes training at esteemed institutions such as the Indian Naval Academy, Naval Defence College (India), Defence Services Staff Course (India), the Junior Officer Command Course at the Royal Malaysian Navy, and the U.S. Coast Guard International Maritime Officer School.

Brigadier General Saleem was decorated with numerous medals in recognition of his exemplary service. These included the Presidential Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Dedicated Service Medal, Defence Force Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, the 17th SAARC Summit Medal, and the Ribbon for Bravery.

With a distinguished career in maritime defence, policy development, and naval leadership, Brigadier General Mohamed Saleem continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening the Maldives' maritime security and operational capabilities.

He is married and has three children: two daughters and a son.



**Rear Admiral Rohan Joseph, RSP, USP, NWC, psc,
MCPS, BSc(DS)Hons, Dip in D&WA, AFNI
FOCNF**

Rear Admiral Rohan Joseph joined the Sri Lanka Navy on 22nd October 1994 as an Officer Cadet of the 12th Intake, General Sir John Kothelawala Defence University (KDU). During his 31-

year naval career, he has held important Staff and Command appointments. Some of the key appointments he held include; Commanding Officer and Officer-in-Command of ships and craft, Deputy Director Training (Sri Lanka Coast Guard), Deputy Director Naval Research Wing, Naval Assistant to the Commander of the Navy, Secretary to the Chief of Defence Staff, and Defence Adviser of the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi, India, and Commandant Naval & Maritime Academy, the premiere training establishment in the Sri Lanka Navy, prior taking up the appointment as the Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Fleet.

He completed his sub-specialization in Sri Lanka (first in order of merit), specialized in Navigation and Direction (Pakistan), Junior Staff Course at the Sri Lanka Military Academy (first in order of merit), Staff Course at the Naval Command College, PLA Navy (China), and Naval Command Course at the U.S. Naval War College (USNWC). He was selected as the 'Honour Graduate' in the International Maritime Officers Course conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard and remains the first Sri Lankan naval officer to achieve this honour. Rear Admiral Joseph also won the Batemans' International Essay Award, considered one of the prestigious writing awards at the USNWC, and remains the only Sri Lankan naval officer to win this award at the USNWC to date.

Rear Admiral Joseph is an alumnus of the USNWC and serves as an honorary fellow at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), the premiere National Security Think Tank of Sri Lanka.

He also serves as an Associated Fellow in the Nautical Institute (UK).

He holds a Master's Degree in Conflict and Peace Studies from the University of Colombo, a Diploma in Security and Strategic Studies (USA), and a diploma in Diplomacy & World Affairs (Distinction Pass).

Rear Admiral Joseph has been invited to speak at several local and international forums as a guest speaker, expert panelist, and regional specialist on maritime security and Indo-Pacific affairs.

His research interests include; peace and conflict studies, maritime security and strategy, and Indo-Pacific affairs.

**Rear Admiral Rohan Joseph, RSP, USP, NWC, psc, MCPS, BSc(DS)Hons,
Dip in D&WA, AFNI
FOCNF**

He has also published several articles in local and international journals and magazines.

Medals that he has received include a gallantry medal (Ranasura Padakkama-RSP) for the act of bravery in the face of the enemy, Uttama Seva Padakkama (USP-medal) for valuable service and devotion to duty marked by exceptional ability, merit, exemplary and unblemished record of moral and military conduct.

Rear Admiral Joseph is a recipient of seven (07) 'Letters of Commendation' from the Commanders of the Sri Lanka Navy for his exemplary performances.

He is married to Mrs. Sonali Edirisinghe and blessed with two sons 'Venuka' and 'Tharuka.'

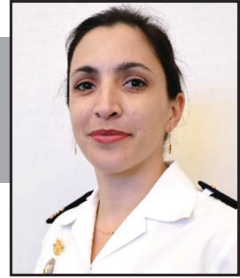


Dr. Asantha Senevirathna
FDSS, KDU

Dr Asantha Senevirathna is currently working as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence and Strategic Studies at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Sri Lanka. He holds a BA (Hons) in Geography from the University of Peradeniya & an MA in International Relations & a PhD in International Relations from the University of Colombo. Before joining KDU, he was the Programme Officer of the International Relations Division at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS), Colombo. Apart from KDU, He is a Visiting Lecturer/Resource person for programmes at National Defence College (NDC), Colombo, Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Batalanda, Army War College (AWC), Buttala, Sri Lanka Air Force Junior Staff & Command College, China Bay, Trincomalee, Sri Lanka Navy Junior Staff Course, Naval and Maritime Academy Trincomalee and Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS), Colombo.

Dr Asantha Senevirathna was a recipient of the 'Knowing China' programme on the Chinese People Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPS) in 2011. He a 'Kautilya Fellow' at India Foundation, India, and a member of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Sri Lanka. He has a special interest in the field of Geopolitics with a focus on global power politics. Dr Asantha Senevirathna has presented many academic papers locally and internationally and has published with international publishers such as Routledge & Springer. His most recent publication is titled 'Geopolitics of India-Sri Lanka Relations: The Way Forward' published by KDU press.

Commander Carine Buzaud
Director of Studies, RCMS, KDU



Lieutenant Commander Carine Buzaud is a French administrator of maritime affairs, with expertise in maritime law, maritime safety, public administration, and international cooperation. She is currently the Director of Studies at the Regional Centre for Maritime Studies (RCMS) in Sri Lanka, where she works at establishing training programmes for civil servants and military personnel from Indian Ocean countries and promoting French maritime expertise.

Her career includes leadership positions in Maritime Search and Rescue Centres (MRCCs), where she coordinated search and rescue operations, inter-agency efforts, and contributed to international training initiatives. She has further supported international maritime safety initiatives by conducting training sessions and audits for regional partners, including the Sri Lanka Navy.

Prior to her work in MRCCs, Ms Buzaud held other roles within the French Ministry in charge of Maritime Affairs, overseeing regulatory compliance, coordinating maritime and port activities, contributing to coastal zone management and supporting marine environmental protection and marine pollution response planning.

Ms Buzaud holds a Master's degree in Public Affairs from Sciences Po Paris, with a specialisation in Asia, and has completed advanced professional training in maritime administration at ESPMer. She has also authored and contributed to publications on maritime safety, governance, and risk management.



**REAR ADMIRAL BUDDHIKA LIYANAGAMAGE, RWP,
RSP, USP, ndc, psc**

Sri Lanka Navy

Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage, an alumnus of Ananda College, Colombo, joined the Sri Lanka Navy in 1992 through the 10th Intake of the Kotelawala Defence Academy. Following his studies at KDU, he underwent initial naval training at the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee.

He completed the Sub Lieutenant Technical Course at the Naval and Maritime Academy and specialized in Communication at the Indian Navy's premier Signal School, INS Venduruthy. He further enhanced his professional qualifications by completing a Staff Course at the Naval Command College in China. Academically, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from KDU. In 2018, he earned a Master of Arts in Security Studies (Combating Terrorism: Policy and Strategy) from the prestigious Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. He also completed the inaugural National Defence and Strategic Studies course in Sri Lanka in 2022.

Throughout his distinguished 32-year career, Rear Admiral Liyanagamage has advanced from Sub Lieutenant to Rear Admiral, steadily progressing through the ranks while serving in various key staff, instructional, and command appointments. His notable positions include roles at the Naval Headquarters, where he was attached to the Operational and Personnel Directorates, and served as the Aide and Personal Secretary to the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy from 2015 to 2017. With extensive experience aboard nearly every category of naval vessel for eleven years, he has also held appointments such as Head of the Training Team (Navy) at the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Director of Naval Operations, Director of Naval Foreign Cooperation, Commandant of the Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee, Deputy Area Commander (East), Director General of Training and Director General of Operations. He currently serves as the Area Commander, Northern Naval Area.

Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage has been recognized for his gallantry with the Ranawickrama Padakkama and Ranasura Padakkama medals for acts of bravery in the face of the enemy, in addition to receiving six Letters of Commendation from the Commanders of the Navy for his exceptional achievements and contributions. He is married to Ms. Jinali Perera, and they are blessed with a daughter, Sanugi.