

Professor Hari Shankar Vasudevan
President (July 2018 – May 2020), IDSK

We, at IDSK, are deeply saddened by the sudden demise of Prof. Hari S. Vasudevan. He was the president of the Governing Council of IDSK since 2018. Renowned historian, Prof. Vasudevan was an expert in the field of Soviet Studies. His well-known works include *Shadows of Substance: Indo-Russian Trade and Military Cooperation Since 1991* (2010), and *In the Footsteps of Afanasii Nikitin: Travels through Eurasia and India in the Twenty-first Century* (2014). Moreover, he edited and co-edited several books, contributed in academic journals like *India International Centre Quarterly*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Indian Historical Review* and regularly wrote in various newspapers. He was a scholar par excellence and his works will remain relevant for years to come.

After finishing his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 1978, Prof. Vasudevan joined the history department of the University of Calcutta. Apart from a brief three year stint at Jamia Milia Islamia (2003-2005), he remained at the University of Calcutta, teaching generations of students the intricacies of European and Russian history. He was also instrumental in setting up the Peace Studies Group, the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies and the Areas Studies Programme at this university. His keen interest in non-Indian history, global connections and foreign policy make him a rare figure among the Indian historians. After his retirement, Prof. Vasudevan became the UGC Emeritus Professor at the University of Calcutta. Prof. Vasudevan was also the Director of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (2007-2011), the Chairman of the text book committee of NCERT (appointed in 2005) and a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Throughout his career, he had also taught in various universities outside India as a visiting professor. We express our condolences to his colleagues and students in these institutes.

We will remember Prof. Vasudevan as a kind man, ever encouraging teacher and an affable colleague. In various PhD interviews, proposal presentation seminars, and innumerable conferences his interventions were always relevant and enriching, but never discouraging. This was his unique quality. While we will fondly remember his impeccable British accent, we will also remember how in his slightly broken Bengali he remained accessible to all. He was a democratic man and strove to make academia a democratic space.

Prof. Vasudevan lived very close to IDSK. He would often walk to the institute and spent hours discussing his research interests and listening to our ongoing works. The last time he came to the institute was during the lockdown itself to give some money to our security guard and to ensure he was doing alright.

In this moment of grief, our thoughts are with his wife Prof. Tapati Guha Thakurta, his daughter Mrinalini, his brother Prof. Ravi Vasudevan and other family members. We are also thinking of his students and friends who will all miss him dearly.

Prof. Hari Vasudevan left all of us too soon. We could not even say a proper goodbye to him.

The members of IDSK family