



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND
TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES

SOUTH ASIA
INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

Department of Political Science

Special Lecture

on

Media and the Prime Minister

India's march of democracy through the media lens

by

Tarun Basu

President, Society for Policy Studies

India's first prime minister Pt. Nehru was a passionate champion of an unfettered and honest media. As India celebrates its 75th year of Independence, its current prime minister Narendra Modi presents a stark contrast. He has had no recorded press conferences in the last eight years of his tenure, and is known for a thinly disguised contempt for independent and critical media, preferring to bypass it by engaging directly with the people through social media and radio soliloquies, or giving occasional interviews to establishment-leaning media who would not cross-question him or ask inconvenient questions. Mr Basu, a renowned journalist with decades long experience of working with India's prime ministers, will talk about the march of Indian democracy since Independence as seen through the eyes of the media. He will delve into the attitude and assertions of India's prime ministers and how they went about defining not only their government's relationship with the media but with democracy itself. Today, when Indian democracy is under assault from within, and governing institutions and principles are being diluted, the prime minister–press dynamic down the decades will have its own story to tell.



Mr Tarun Basu is a veteran editor, media commentator, and policy analyst. Basu heads a think tank, the Society for Policy Studies (www.spsindia.in) that runs the South Asia Monitor (www.southasiamonitor.org), a resource and policy forum on South Asia and publishes a fortnightly policy journal, the *India Review & Analysis*. He has worked for both Indian and international media organizations, including as the India correspondent of Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), 1980–87. He is the Founder-Director of the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS), India's only private and independent news agency and content provider on multimedia platforms, and was its Chief Editor till 2015. Mr Basu has travelled with eight of India's prime ministers and engaged personally with many of them.

Date: Monday, June 20, 2022

Time: 14:00 – 16:00, CET

Venue: CATS, Great Lecture Hall (room 010.01.05, building 4010)