



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge
Knowledge for All

GULF RESEARCH MEETING

16th Gulf Research Meeting

21 - 23 July 2026 – University of Cambridge

Workshop No. 6

Gulf–South Asia Relations in an Era of Deepening Interdependence

Workshop Schedule

Workshop Directors

Dr. Mujtaba Isani
Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan

Dr. Zahid Shahab Ahmed
National Defense College, UAE

First Workshop Day - Wednesday, 22 July 2026

08:15 - 08:30 – Welcome coffee and tea

08:30 - 09:00 – Introduction of Workshop and Participants

**09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 1: Strategic Crossroads: The Saudi–Pakistan Defence Pact and the
Emerging Architecture of Gulf–South Asia Security Relations**

Author: Irina Tsukerman and Oliver Steward

Discussant: Muhammad Shabbir

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 2: Divided by Security, United by Economy: Reimagining South Asia-Gulf Security for the Post-Cold War Order

Author: Omair Anas

Discussant: Danish Khan/Adnan Rafiq

10:30 - 10:45 – Coffee and tea break

10:45 - 11:30 – Paper 3: Strategic Interdependence in Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Relations

Author: Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Discussant: Mujtaba Ali Isani

11:30 - 12:15 – Paper 4: Beyond Transactional Ties: Explaining the Durability of Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Relations through a SWOT Analysis

Author: Mujtaba Ali Isani

Discussant: Zahid Shahab Ahmed

12:15 - 13:00 – Paper 5: Redefining Pakistan–Gulf Strategic Interdependence: Defence, Connectivity, and Regional Architectures in a Multipolar Era

Author: Muhammad Shabbir

Discussant: Oliver Steward

13:00 - 15:00 – Lunch break (lunch served at King's College)

15:00 - 15:45 – Paper 6: Repositioning South Asia–Gulf Interdependencies for Economic Diversification and Development: Evidence from Sri Lanka

Author: Bilesha Weeraratne

Discussant: Joshua Snider

15:45 - 16:30 – Paper 7: Political Economy of Pakistan–Saudi Arabia Security Pact: Understanding Regional Coalitions in a Multipolar World

Authors: Danish Khan and Adnan Rafiq

Discussant: Suhaib Shaukat

End of First Workshop Day

Evening Free

Second Workshop Day - Thursday, 23 July 2026

08:45 - 09:00 – Welcome coffee and tea

09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 8: Exploring Information Gaps Between Pre-departure and Post-arrival Orientation Programs: A Pilot Study on the Case of the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka

Authors: Dina Sameh Sami Habib Youssef, Ahmed Al Hashemi & Francis Solomantine

Discussant: Tehseen Nisar

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 9: Women Empowerment under UN Sustainable Development Goals’ Agenda 2030: Pakistani Women Migrants in UAE as Agents of Change, Social Innovation and Peaceful Coexistence

Author: Tehseen Nisar

Discussant: Najam Abbas

10:30 - 11:15 – Paper 10: Reinventing Pakistan’s Youth for a Changing Gulf–South Asia Labour Regime: Interdependence, Skills and Adaptation

Author: Najam Abbas

Discussant: Md Abdullah Al Masum

11:15 - 11:30 – Coffee and tea break

11:30 - 12:15 - Paper 11: Labour Migration and Interdependence: Bangladeshi Migrant Workers in Gulf–South Asia Relations

Authors: Md Abdullah Al Masum and Gias Uddin Talukder

Discussant: Trishna Sarkar

12:15 – 13:00 – Paper 12: A Multidimensional Analysis of Economic Integration, Labour Mobility, and Sustainability between India and the GCC

Authors: Trishna Sarkar and Narender Thakur

Discussant: Omair Anas

13:00 - 14:15 – Lunch break (lunch is served from 13:00 till 14:00 at the workshop venue)

14:15 - 15:00 – Paper 13: Crisis Diplomacy and Defence Deepening: Why Pakistan, GCC Security Ties Intensify During Regional Shocks

Authors: Suhaib Shaukat and Arhama Siddiqua

Discussant: Dina Sameh Sami Habib Youssef

15:00 - 15:45 – Paper 14: Recasting Sri Lanka – Gulf Relations: A Multidimensional Political Economy of a Neglected Partnership

Author: Joshua Snider

Discussant: Bilesha Weeraratne

15:45 - 16:15 – Concluding session - Publication plans and next steps and questionnaire

End of Second and Final Workshop Day

19:00 Farewell Dinner at King's College