

Guest Lecture: The GCC States: Geopolitical Perceptions and Transformations

Venue: LIAC Hall

Date: 20th September 2023

Time: 10 am – 12 pm

The event began with welcoming the guest lecturer, Dr. Radhika Lakshminarayan, an academician with 30 years' experience in universities in India and Kuwait. She teaches world history, Kuwait studies, European history, Indian history, and international relations. Dr. Radhika conducts soft skill training as well as is a curriculum designer for university and school curricula (history, international relations, and international studies).

Dr. Radhika started the lecture by quoting, "Whoever controls oil controls much more than oil." The Gulf is to be seen as a vulnerable region due to its oil resources. Before oil was discovered in the Gulf, people were tribals, and their economy was highly dependent on making money, with jobs dependent on the sea. Geopolitically, the region is a global energy market with high oil production. One of the major problems for Gulf countries is the artificial borders drawn by colonial powers. Gulf economies shaped by oil wealth are studied through the concept of the rentier state, which suggests that the dominance of oil wealth has distinctive, largely unavoidable political, social, and economic effects. Rentier state theory was developed to explain the difficulty of diversifying economies, the power of national security states, and patriarchal political cultures. The extremely unbalanced labor markets in Gulf countries pose a profound challenge to any effort at economic reform. Most of the private sector labor force across the Gulf is composed of foreign labor, and in four of the six GCC countries, foreign residents outnumber citizens in the population. Any effort at economic diversification will have to confront these extreme imbalances.