

Editorial

The *Journal of Defence Studies* has consistently aimed to publish issues on pertinent themes, addressing a wide range of defence and security-related topics. In the last couple of years, we have seen not only increased readership of the journal, but also increased number of submissions to the journal. The response to the 'Call for Papers' for the special issue on 'Atmanirbharta (Self-Reliance) in Defence and Aeronautics' has been exceptional, so much so that including all the selected articles and commentaries in a single special issue would be challenging. We are therefore splitting the special issue into two parts. The July–September 2024 issue will serve as Part I, featuring 8 articles and 12 commentaries. It will be followed by Part II, which will be published as the October–December 2024 issue.

It was in 2020 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a clarion call for the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', or Self-Reliant India, implying to make the country and its citizens independent and self-reliant in all senses. The government has taken several policy initiatives in the past few years to encourage indigenous design, development and manufacture of defence equipment in the country. Highlighting the importance of a robust research and development (R&D) ecosystem, the first article titled 'Indian Research and Development Ecosystem for Self-Reliance', by Maj Gen Ranjit Ghosh (Retd), draws attention to the present challenges in developing robust indigenous capabilities and the fleeting opportunities that need to be exploited to further strengthen the R&D ecosystem and accelerate India's pace of attaining self-reliance.

The second article titled 'The Making of Technological Innovation Ecosystem in Defence Sector', is by Mr Om Prakash Das. The article explores the evolving ecosystem of start-ups and highlights the role of collaborations between the defence establishment and various evolving stakeholders in reshaping innovation in the technological domain.

In present times, conflicts have become swift, intense, tech-driven and have high impact. India's exposure to a hostile neighbourhood makes it important to possess indigenous weapon systems to face any eventuality

that might occur. Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket System (MBRS) is a step in this direction. Maj Michael John Bennis, in his article titled 'Atmanirbhar Bharat and Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket System: Implications for India in National Security and Strategic Autonomy', talks about the development of the rocket system since inception, the current challenges being faced and the measures that India needs to take to achieve favourable strategic autonomy and national security.

India aspires to become a global drone hub by 2030 and 'atmanirbhar' in critical technologies, including drones. The non-availability of civil drone atmanirbharta policy, research and development structures and technology development initiatives in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, as well as absence of policies on certification and acquisition of indigenously designed drones, seem to be creating challenges for India. These issues have been discussed in detail in the fourth article titled 'Civil Drone Certification and Atmanirbharta Challenges in India', by Gp Capt R.K. Narang. The article also proposes a way forward to overcome limitations, anomalies and challenges, and for building a high-technology, high-value globally competitive drone industry in India.

Considering that India has set ambitious targets relating to defence exports, the role of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and their ability to contribute to exports will continue to remain under close watch. Dr S. Samuel C. Rajiv, in his article 'Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Exports: An Assessment', examines issues related to exports by the nine major DPSUs of India, under the broad categories of ships, aircraft and sensors. Key aspects related to R&D expenditure, marketing partnerships and lines of credit (LoCs) have also been discussed in the article.

In the last decade, the expenditure on procurement from domestic sources has increased considerably. Whether this means that India is inching closer to being self-reliant in defence production, and it is the result of the steps taken for making the acquisition procedures more efficacious, has been covered in detail by Mr Amit Cowshish in the article titled 'Defence Acquisition Procedure for Self-Reliance'. The article also highlights some issues related to the policy and procedural framework which may possibly be encumbering the process of achieving self-reliance in the true sense of the term.

A detailed analysis of the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 (DAP 2020), a comprehensive framework established by the Ministry of Defence to streamline the process of acquiring defence equipment and services, has been done in the seventh article titled 'Fine-tuning of Defence Acquisition Procedures for Atmanirbhar Bharat', by Mr Arvind Khare. The article

examines how far the objectives of the DAP 2020 have been achieved, and also highlights some relevant issues that need to be addressed in the next version of DAP.

The last article featuring in this special issue is titled 'Promoting Domestic Prosperity: A Comprehensive Analysis of Prioritising Indigenous Industries in Defence Procurements', by Gp Capt Rajiv Gangadharan and Dr Amrita Nighojkar. This article examines the current defence procurement landscape in India, with a focus on promoting indigenous industries through the 'Make in India' initiative, analysing both the benefits and challenges that arise from such an approach. Drawing insights from successful global models, the article advocates for an improved policy framework that elevates domestic players while integrating them into the broader international defence ecosystem.

This special issue also features 12 commentaries. We hope that this special issue will be received well by our readers. We would also like to thank the authors and the referees who assisted us in the peer review process. We would appreciate feedback from our readers about topics they feel should be addressed by the journal. We hope that along with our growing readership, we will see a further increase in the number of contributions for our future issues.

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