

Editorial

I am pleased to present to the readers the fourth issue of 2025, which brings together five insightful articles, three commentaries and three book reviews. I would also like to take this opportunity to inform our readers about a special issue planned for 2026. The title of the special issue is “The Year of Reforms: Reshaping India’s Defence for the Decade Ahead”; contributions are invited for the same.

The present issue begins with an article titled “Clamour for Going Nuclear Gains Traction in South Korea”, in which Dr Rajaram Panda examines the unfolding security scenario in East Asia, where North Korea’s relentless pursuit of nuclear development and China’s threat to annex Taiwan and take full control of the South China Sea have prompted South Korea and Japan to strengthen their defence capabilities and acquire more sophisticated and lethal weapons. The article talks about the China–North Korea nexus and a developing Russia–China–North Korea triangular relationship, besides abandonment fears related to the US security guarantee that have reignited the nuclear debate in South Korea about developing its own nuclear weapons.

It is followed by an article titled “The Evolution and Future of Mobile Artillery: Technological Advances, History and Future of Artillery Warfare”, by Dr Amit Sharma. The article talks about the evolution of mobile artillery, the technological breakthroughs, the strategic shifts and the role of major militaries in shaping the doctrine of mobile firepower. The article draws lessons from recent conflicts like the Russia–Ukraine war and the Azerbaijan–Armenia clashes, and analyses how mobile artillery, augmented by unmanned aerial vehicles, smart munitions and autonomous logistics, has adapted to fast-paced, multi-domain operations.

In the third article titled “The Budgetary Conundrum of the Indian Armed Forces: A Military Perspective”, Col Dheeraj Kumar Singh and Brig Munish Matta provide a comprehensive analysis of the key aspects of defence budgeting, allocation and expenditure, with a particular focus on the perspectives of the defence establishments as the end-users of the budget. The article covers both the quantitative aspects such as the composition of the

overall allocation, shares of the three armed forces, as well as the qualitative aspects of the defence budget, for instance, the need to balance manpower costs with equipment procurement and modernisation, the impact of rising inflation on the purchasing power of the defence budget, and the implications of the revenue–capital expenditure mix on the overall readiness and combat effectiveness of the armed forces.

It is followed by an article titled “The Political Economy of South Korea’s Arms Trade with India: Challenges and Prospects”, by Dr Ranjit Kumar Dhawan. While India’s developing economic and strategic relations with South Korea are well-documented, the latter has also emerged as a notable exporter of weapons to India. The recent success of some defence-related joint ventures, such as the production of K9 Vajra howitzers, shows the potential for further cooperation in trade and joint production of military equipment between India and South Korea. The article argues that the recent developments are largely part of South Korea’s export-oriented economic development strategy, and covers in detail the challenges and prospects of South Korea’s trade in weapons with India.

The last article of this issue titled “The Tribal Connect to Maoist Insurgency in India: The Historical Context and Alleviation Measures by the Government”, is by Col Shashank Ranjan (Retd). The article delves into the historical roots of tribal alienation in India that originated during the colonial era and continues in present times under different manifestations, and then analyses statutes and government initiatives, including their implementation, challenges and impact towards alleviating tribal alienation, especially in the Bastar division of Chhattisgarh.

This issue also features three commentaries: “Crossing Lines: Drugs, Insurgency and Disorder in the Indo-Myanmar Borderlands” by Ms Manashi Parashar; “The AUKUS Submarine Roadmap: A Bridge Too Far?”, by Dr R. Vignesh; and “Evolving Competitive Militant Landscape of Pakistan and its Implications” by Mr Harsh Behere. Three book reviews also feature in this issue.

We hope that this 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 on 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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