



INDIAN MILITARY HERITAGE FESTIVAL

14 - 15 November, 2025

BROCHURE



United Service Institution of India (USI)

शिव प्रताप शुक्ल

राज्यपाल

हिमाचल प्रदेश

राज भवन, शिमला



सत्यमेव जयते



Shiv Pratap Shukla

Governor

Himachal Pradesh

0177-2624152

2624440

governorsecy-hp@nic.in

Message

I extend my best wishes for the successful conduct of the third edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival (IMHF), being held on 14-15 November 2025. This distinguished annual event, organised by the United Service Institution of India (USI), stands as a significant milestone in the institution's glorious legacy.

The USI has played a pivotal role in promoting the study and understanding of military history, strategy, and defence-related affairs. The IMHF is a commendable initiative that highlights the rich and diverse heritage of our Armed Forces, while also fostering meaningful dialogue on matters of national security, strategic affairs, and civil-military cooperation.

It is of immense pleasure to know that the rich and proud military history, martial traditions, and unique culture of Himachal Pradesh shall find dedicated showcasing and celebration at this year's IMHF. Home to an Indian Army Mountain Division and a proud troop-contributor to the Dogra Regiment, Himachal Pradesh has a long-standing military legacy of sacrifice and valour, traceable to the Vedic Era.

I am confident that the IMHF will continue to grow in reach and impact, inspiring future generations, and reinforcing our national pride in the military heritage of India.

I call upon all citizens, especially the youth, to participate in this unique event, in order to honour the legacy of our brave men and women in uniform, as also to deepen their understanding of India's military heritage and strategic vision.

(Shiv Pratap Shukla)



MESSAGE

I am very happy to learn that the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS), a constituent unit of the United Service Institute (USI) is organizing its annual 'Indian Military Heritage Festival' in the month of November in New Delhi. As the Chairperson of Raigad Development Authority (RDA), it gives me greater pleasure since we will be participating in the festival as well.

In a country like India having a rich and diverse history spanning over three thousand years and having witnessed several empires and kingdoms besides innumerable invasions, military history is as important as its complex and vibrant socio-cultural past. It requires to be delved into and studied with equal importance since, often, they are closely intertwined. While we have scholarly works on the Indian Military History of the modern period, the documentation, or academic studies of the historic, early medieval or the medieval period are sketchy at the best. Serious research is essential if we want to plug all the gaps in the accounts available.

I believe that the CMHCS is in the forefront of making such painstaking efforts. The RDA looks forward to collaborating with the CMHCS to understand and bring to the public the Military History of the Marathas; their strategic planning and execution of campaigns; their pioneering efforts in using the Naval forces with success; being the forerunners in carrying out guerilla warfare etc. In addition, detailed documentation and study of the various Maratha forts are proposed to be undertaken jointly.

The two-day annual festival was first organized in the year 2023 and immediately found a lot of support as evidenced by the success of the first two editions. I have no doubt that the participation and the interest will grow further in the coming years. I am sure the rich knowledge gathered from the discussions and presentations will eventually come out as useful publications.

May I wish the festival all success!

Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati
Chairperson
Raigad Development Authority



MESSAGE

1. It gives me great pleasure to extend my greetings towards conduct of the 'Third Edition' of the Indian Military Heritage Festival (IMHF), organised by the United Service Institution of India (USI) – Asia's oldest defence think tank, with a legacy of over 150 years of dedicated service to the study of Military History, Strategy, and National Security.
2. The IMHF has evolved into a distinguished national platform celebrating India's rich military traditions and the ethos of its Armed Forces. Through its deliberations and cultural initiatives, the Festival fosters informed dialogue on defence, strategy, and civil-military cooperation, while strengthening the connect between the Armed Forces and the citizenry.
3. Over successive editions, the Festival has launched significant initiatives such as 'Project Udbhav', which revives India's ancient strategic thought, and 'Shaurya Gatha', which contributes to shaping national policy on military heritage and education. These efforts exemplify the IMHF's growing role in preserving our martial legacy and linking it with contemporary national aspirations.
4. I commend the USI for its vision and commitment in advancing public understanding of India's military heritage and professional excellence. I am confident that the IMHF will continue to expand in reach and impact, reinforcing national pride in our Armed Forces and inspiring future generations to cherish, preserve, and build upon India's distinguished military legacy.

Jai Hind !

(Anil Chauhan)
General

Chief of Defence Staff & Secretary, DMA

06 November 2025

Air Mshl Ashutosh Dixit AVSM VM VSM
Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the
Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee



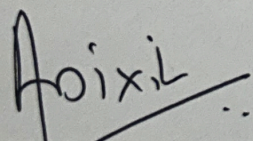
**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT,
UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION OF INDIA**

1. I extend my warm greetings and best wishes for the successful conduct of the **third edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival (IMHF)**, being held on **14-15 November 2025**. This distinguished annual event, organised by the **United Service Institution of India (USI)**, reflects the Institution's illustrious legacy of over 150 years and its pioneering role as **Asia's oldest defence think tank**.
2. The USI has consistently advanced the study of **military history, strategy, and defence affairs**. The Indian Military Heritage Festival is a commendable initiative that celebrates the **rich and diverse traditions of our Armed Forces**, while fostering informed dialogue on **national security, strategic affairs, and civil-military cooperation**. Such platforms are vital in today's era, as India emerges as a **pillar of stability and strength** in South Asia and on the global stage.
3. The Festival provides citizens with a unique opportunity to appreciate the **sacrifices, ethos, and contributions** of our men and women in uniform. Equally, it builds a bridge between the Armed Forces and **society-inspiring citizens, especially the youth**, to connect with India's defence ecosystem and to honour the legacy of our brave soldiers.
4. Over successive editions, the IMHF has matured into a **nationally recognised platform**. It has hosted enriching discussions and served as the **launchpad for important initiatives** of the Indian Military - such as **Project Udbhav**, which revives India's ancient strategic thought, and **Shaurya Gatha**, which is shaping national policy on military heritage and education. Collectively, these efforts strengthen the continuum between **our military past and our national aspirations for the future**.

5. The Festival also engages with **contemporary defence and security challenges**. By bringing deliberations on strategy, history, and current affairs into the public domain, it highlights the **ethos and professionalism** of our Armed Forces – enhancing public understanding of the **soldier's values**, the **complexities of national security**, and the **responsibilities of citizenship**. Insights generated through such forums enrich policy-making by drawing on the lessons of history and the perspectives of veterans, diplomats, and scholars.

6. This year's edition will also see the release of notable publications, including the **Coffee Table Book Portraits of Valour** – a collection of military paintings by **Lt Col Arul Raj** – alongside an exhibition of these works. As emphasised in earlier editions, developing **literature and art around military heritage** is vital to deepening the connect between the Armed Forces and the public. The efforts to turn this vision into reality deserve commendation.

7. I am confident that the **Indian Military Heritage Festival** will continue to grow in **reach and impact**, reinforcing our national pride in the Armed Forces and inspiring future generations to **cherish, preserve, and build upon India's distinguished military heritage**.



(Ashutosh Dixit)

Air Mshl

Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee
President, United Service Institution of India.

11 Nov 25



UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION OF INDIA

Founded : 1870

*Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd)*
Director General



MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my greetings on the occasion of the **third edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival (IMHF)**, being held on **14–15 November 2025** under the aegis of the United Service Institution of India (USI).

Founded in 1870, the USI has steadfastly pursued its mission of advancing professional military education, research, and the study of defence, security, and strategy. Over the years, the Institution has grown into a centre of excellence for intellectual exchange among the Armed Forces, policymakers, diplomats, academics, and civil society. The IMHF is a natural extension of this endeavour—bringing India's rich and diverse military heritage into the national consciousness while fostering meaningful debate on contemporary challenges in the fields of security and strategy.

The Festival is unique in its character. It celebrates the courage, traditions, and ethos of the Armed Forces, while simultaneously reaching out to the public at large. It is through such initiatives that the stories of sacrifice and valour of our soldiers are shared more widely, and the bridge between the military and society is further strengthened. The Festival also serves as an important platform to encourage our youth to connect with India's strategic thought and military history.

This year's edition builds on the success of the previous two Festivals. It will showcase the **flagship initiatives of the Indian Military**—Project Udbhav, which revives ancient Indian strategic wisdom; Shaurya Gatha, which lays the foundation for a national policy on military heritage and education; and Bharatrann Bhoomi Darshan, aimed at promoting battlefield and border-area tourism. Together, these initiatives link heritage with policy, education, and future opportunities for the nation.

An important highlight of this year's Festival will be the release of several **new publications produced by the USI over the past year**. These include the Coffee Table Book ***Portraits of Valour: Timeless Military Art by Lieutenant Colonel Arul Raj***, which will be accompanied by an exhibition of his evocative military paintings. Alongside this, other USI research volumes and publications will also be released, reflecting the Institution's commitment to advancing knowledge and creating literature that strengthens the connect between the Armed Forces and society.

The IMHF has now become a nationally recognised platform that not only preserves and celebrates India's military past but also provides space for dialogue on its strategic present and future. The enthusiastic participation of the Armed Forces, veterans, scholars, and citizens has been central to its success. On behalf of the USI, I extend my deep gratitude to all our partners and well-wishers for their support in making this Festival possible.

I am confident that the IMHF will continue to grow in stature, inspire pride in our Armed Forces, and encourage future generations to cherish, preserve, and build upon India's distinguished military heritage.

(BK Sharma)
Maj Gen (Retd)

Direct : 20862322
Tele : 20862326
 : 20862321
Fax : 20862324
E-mail : dg@usiofindia.org

Ext.
201

ABOUT USI

The United Service Institution of India (USI), founded in 1870, is India's premier national security and defence services think-tank. Its aim is the "furtherance of interest and knowledge in the art, science and literature of the defence services". The Institution has niche expertise in the field of National Security, Geopolitics, International Relations and Military Diplomacy, Military History and Heritage, UN Peacekeeping, professional skill development and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* in defence technology.

The USI – Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS) encourages an objective study of all facets of Indian military history, emphasising on the history of the Indian Armed Forces. It is the only centre of its kind dedicated to study on military history, conflict, and the preservation of India's military heritage. In addition, the Centre plays an active role in public diplomacy, commemoration and remembrance, the development of military museums, and the conservation of military heritage, working in collaboration with multiple global partners to achieve these goals.

THE INDIAN MILITARY HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The Indian Military Heritage Festival (IMHF), the annual flagship event of USI-CMHCS, plays a vital role in increasing awareness of India's military history and issues of national security. This two-day event seamlessly weaves historical discussions with contemporary concerns and future visions, creating a dynamic platform for engagement. Designed to set a new benchmark for public interaction with military history and heritage, the Festival features interactive sessions and meaningful dialogues that align with the objective of strengthening and modernising the Armed Forces for the 21st century.

By renewing and revitalising interest in cultural traditions associated with the Armed Forces, the Festival not only honours the past but also addresses pressing global and national security challenges. Through insightful discussions, it fosters a deeper understanding of key issues, bridging the gap between historical perspectives and present-day realities.

MILITARY HISTORY AND HERITAGE

India's military history and heritage are extensive and diverse, spanning epochs of warfare and valour. From the ancient battles recounted in epics like the *Mahabharata* to the empires of the Mughals and Marathas, India's past is deeply intertwined with its military achievements. Highlighting this history is vital as it honours the sacrifices of soldiers, imparts invaluable lessons from past conflicts, and helps shape national identity and pride. India's military heritage stands as a testament to its resilience and adaptability, serving as a source of inspiration for generations to come. Preserving this legacy is not just about honouring the past; it is about guiding the future with lessons learnt from history. The Indian Military Heritage Festival aims to explore and showcase this rich legacy to the world.

SECURITY, STRATEGY & GEO-POLITICS

The IMHF is a major rendezvous for the entire military ecosystem. It provides a platform for discussions on a host of contemporary issues relating to India and the world in a vertical dealing with Security, Strategy and International Relations.

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT INITIATIVE

The USI *Atmanirbhar Bharat* Initiative (ANBI) provides a platform to designers, developers, manufacturers and security forces to cross-fertilise ideas and develop a robust ecosystem for indigenisation and self-reliance in defence technology. Specially curated sessions are conducted for the services and strategic industry partners to debate and reflect on the existing and evolving technologies.

“Today, India is not just a market for defence companies, it is also a potential defence partner. I call on India's private sector to invest more and more in the country's defence sector”

- Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi

AIM

To acquaint future thought leaders with the nuances of our rich military history and the dynamics of comprehensive national security, with special emphasis on India's strategic culture, military heritage, education, modernisation of security forces and *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

OBJECTIVES

- Highlight India's rich military heritage and indigenous military cultures. Also, promote literature on Indian military history and the art and science of warfare.
- Facilitate policymakers and strategic thinkers to build consensus on issues concerning modern warfare and India's interests and aspirations.
- To provide a platform to the designers, developers, manufacturers, and Industry partners for promoting the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* programme.
- Provide a stage for discussions of future and emerging technologies in the military domain and showcase developments in these technologies in influencing the modern battlespace.
- To promote a nuanced understanding of evolving geopolitics, its impact on the global order, and implications for India's strategic security.
- Inculcate not only the 'All of Government' approach to national security, but also to engage the whole of the nation to foster greater understanding of the current and emerging security challenges in a holistic manner.

EXHIBITION

PORTRAITS OF VALOUR: TIMELESS MILITARY PAINTINGS BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL ARUL RAJ

As India marks 78 years of independence, the Indian Military Heritage Festival 2025 is honoured to showcase a landmark exhibition dedicated to the works of Lieutenant Colonel Arul Raj, soldier, artist, and chronicler of India's modern military history.

Since Independence, India has fought five major wars and countless operations to safeguard its sovereignty and stability. Yet, while historians have recorded these events in words, they have rarely been captured on canvas. Through his extraordinary skill, Lt Col Raj bridges this gap, bringing alive the valour, sacrifice, and fortitude of the Indian Armed Forces in a way that is both historically authentic and emotionally resonant.

This exhibition presents a visual chronicle of India's martial journey, from pre-independence and the first Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-48, to subsequent conflicts that tested and defined the nation. His canvases portray battle scenes, military life, naval power, aerial combat, and portraits of Param Vir Chakra awardees, iconic leaders, and service chiefs, reflecting not only the grit of war but also the human spirit behind it.

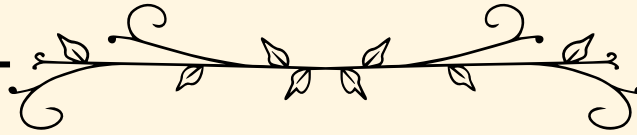
Lt Col Raj's works already hold pride of place at the National War Memorial, the Manekshaw Centre, Service Academies, Regimental Centres, and National Institutions across India. They are more than art; they are a living record, preserving for posterity the stories of courage that future generations must never forget.

At IMHF 2025, *Portraits of Valour: Timeless Military Paintings* invites citizens, scholars, veterans, and youth alike to experience:

- Historic battles retold through art – accessible to those who may have no memory of these wars.
- Rare depictions of soldierly life – behind-the-lines moments that reveal dedication, sacrifice, and service.
- A bridge between art and history – where brushstrokes become testimony, and canvases echo the heartbeat of a nation.

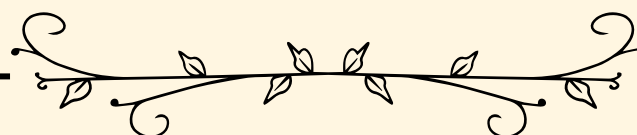
From the earliest civilisations, artists have immortalised the triumphs and struggles of their people. In the same tradition, Lt Col Raj has given India a rare visual record of its post-independence military history. His art ensures that when the din of war fades, the courage of the Indian soldier endures; not just in memory, but in colour, form, and spirit.

This exhibition stands as one of the highlights of IMHF 2025: a reminder that the destiny of nations often rests on the courage of their soldiers, and that through art, we can honour their service while inspiring future generations.



PROGRAMME

Indian Military Heritage Festival 2025



Day 1 (14th Nov 2025)

TIME (hrs)	AUDITORIUM	SEMINAR ROOM - 1
0930 onwards	REGISTRATION	
0950 - 1035	INAUGURATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0950 Arrival of the Chief Guest 0950 - 1000 Inauguration of the Exhibition “Portraits of Valour: Military Paintings of Lt Col Arul Raj” 1000 - 1005 Welcome Address by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), DG USI 1005 - 1020 Keynote Address by Shri. Sanjay Seth, Hon’ble Minister of State for Defence, Chief Guest 1020 - 1025 Release of the New Publications (The Sukraniti: Statecraft And Warcraft, Honours & Awards, 75 Years of India’s Contribution to UN Peacekeeping) 1025 - 1030 Felicitation of the Chief Guest 1030 - 1035 Vote of Thanks by Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, MBE (Retd), Director, USI - CMHCS 1035 Departure of the Chief Guest 	
1045 - 1145	OPERATION SINDOOR: CATALYSING ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT (Special Session) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lt Gen. Rajiv Ghai, SYSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM***, DCOAS (Strategy) VAdm AN Pramod, AVSM, YSM, DGNO Air Mshl Awadesh Kumar Bharti, SYSM, AVSM, VM, DCAS Moderator: Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), DG USI	
1145 - 1230	THE WAR INDIA FORGOT - I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Diya Gupta, <i>India in the Second World War: An Emotional History</i> (Oxford University Press, 2023) Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, <i>The Great Flap of 1942: How the Raj Panicked over a Japanese Non-Invasion</i> (Vintage Books, 2024) Moderator: Prof Indivar Kamtekar	THE FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA’S STRATEGIC AUTONOMY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Kallol Bhattacharjee, <i>Nehru's First Recruits: The Diplomats Who Built Independent India's Foreign Policy</i> (HarperCollins India, 2024) Prof. Aditya Mukherjee, <i>Nehru's India: Past, Present & Future</i> (Penguin, 2024) Moderator: Amb. TCA Raghavan, IFS (Retd)
1230 - 1315	SPECIAL SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1230 Arrival of Thiru. R. N. Ravi, Hon’ble Governor of Tamil Nadu (Chief Guest) 1230 - 1240 Tour of the Exhibition: ‘Timeless Military Paintings’ by Lt Col Arul Raj (Artist) 1240 - 1242 National Anthem 1242 - 1245 Welcome Address by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), DG USI 1245 - 1255 Address by Lt Col Arul Raj - Artist 1255 - 1257 Public Release of CTB ‘Portraits of Valour: Timeless Military Art by Lt Col Arul Raj’ along with felicitation of the Chief Guest 1257 - 1312 Keynote Address by Chief Guest 1312 - 1313 Vote of Thanks by Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, MBE (Retd), Director, USI - CMHCS 1313 - 1315 National Anthem 	

TIME (hrs)	AUDITORIUM	SEMINAR ROOM - 1
1315 - 1350	LUNCH	
1400 - 1450	<p>THE WAR INDIA FORGOT - II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Sima Saigal, <i>The Second World War and North East India: Shadows of Yesteryears</i> (Routledge India, 2024) Mr. David Allison, <i>Fight Your Way Out: The Siege of Sangshak</i> (Pen and Sword Military, 2023) <p>Moderator: Dr. Peter Johnston</p>	<p>FUTURE CONFLICTS AND STRATEGIC HORIZONS: NAVIGATING EMERGING THREATS AND GREY ZONE CHALLENGES FOR INDIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Vice Mshl Anil Golani (Retd), DG CAPS, <i>Asian Defence Review 2024: Emerging Technologies and Changing Dimensions of Threats for India</i> (KW Publishers, 2024) Lt Gen Dushyant Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), DG CLAWS, <i>Grey Zone Warfare: Way Ahead for India</i> (Vij Books, 2023) Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd), Director Editorial, USI, <i>USI Strategic Year Book 2025</i> (United Service Institution of India, 2025) <p>Moderator: Maj Gen (Dr.) SB Asthana, SM, VSM, PhD (Retd), Director, Courses, USI</p>
1500 - 1550	<p>THE WAR INDIA FORGOT - III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Gautam Hazarika, <i>The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of World War II - Surviving Hell Under the Japanese</i> (Penguin and Pen & Sword, 2025) IWM Team: Dr. Peter Johnston & Mr. Adrian Kerrison Col Mandeep Singh (Retd), <i>Forgotten: History of Hong Kong Singapore Royal Artillery</i> (Pentagon Press, 2025) <p>Moderator: Mr. Julian Farrance</p>	<p>POLITICAL ISLAM ACROSS TIME AND BORDERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd) Prof S Irfan Habib <p>In conversation with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Adil Rasheed, <i>Political Islam: Parallel Currents in West Asia and South Asia</i>, Pentagon Press, 2023
1600 - 1650	<p>CONTESTED PARTITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Sam Dalrymple, <i>Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia</i> (HarperCollins, 2025) Dr. Pallavi Raghavan <p>Moderator: Cmde C Uday Bhaskar (Retd)</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGY: ADAPTING WARFARE FOR THE FUTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Col Sanjay Singh (Retd), Chief General Manager, UPDIC Dr Mayank Dwivedi, ndc, OS & Director General (HR), DRDO Gunjan Chawla, ICRC, Delhi Shri Prem Andrade, Distinguished Engineer Air Vice Mshl Arun Malik, VSM (Retd) <p>Moderator: Maj Gen (Dr) Pawan Anand, AVSM, PhD (Retd), Director, USI-CETANB</p>
1700 - 1740	<p>RISING INDIA ENGAGES THE WORLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amb. Rajiv Sikri, IFS (Retd), <i>Strategic Conundrums: Reshaping India's Foreign Policy</i> (Penguin Business, 2024) <p>In conversation with - Ms. Suhasini Haidar, Senior Journalist and Diplomatic Editor, The Hindu</p>	

Day 2 (15th Nov 2025)

TIME (hrs)	AUDITORIUM	SEMINAR ROOM - 1
1000 - 1050	<p>UDBHAV: GREAT INDIAN MILITARY LEADERS AND MILITARY SYSTEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Pushpa Kurup, <i>Malabar, Mysore, and a Tale of Two Sultans</i> (Occam - an imprint of BluOne Ink, 2024) Col Ajay Raina, SM (Retd), <i>Beyond the Frozen Frontiers: General Zorawar Singh's Life & His Forays Into The Himalayan Highlands</i> (Sabre & Quill, 2024) Maj VV Narayanan (Retd) <p>Moderator: Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)</p>	<p>TAMING THE WAVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAdm Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd), DG, National Maritime Foundation Dr. Vijay Sakhuja (Editor) Dr. Pragya Pandey (Editor) <p><i>K.M. Panikkar and The Growth of a Maritime Consciousness in India</i> (ICWA and Vij Books, 2022)</p> <p>Moderator: Prof Anirudh Deshpande, <i>The Rise and Fall of a Brown Water Navy: Sarkhel Kanhoji Angre and Maratha Sea Power on the Arabian Sea in the 17th and 18th Centuries</i> (Aakar Books, 2021)</p>
1100 - 1150	<p>MILITARY BIOGRAPHIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lt Gen Satish Dua, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd), <i>Bravest of the Brave: The Inspiring Story of Naib Subedar Chunni Lal, AC, VrC, SM</i> (HarperCollins, 2025); <i>A General Reminisces: A Life under Fire in Kashmir</i> (Penguin India, 2025) Air Vice Mshl (Dr.) Arjun Subramaniam, AVSM, PhD (Retd), <i>Shooting Straight: A Military Biography of Lt Gen Rostum K Nanavatty</i> (HarperCollins, 2025) Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), <i>A Kahmir Knight and the Last 50 Years of the Princely State of J&K</i> (Sabre & Quill, 2025) <p>Moderator: Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)</p>	<p>TUSSLES OVER TIBET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amb Dilip Sinha, IFS (Retd), <i>Imperial Games in Tibet</i> (Pan Macmillan, 2024) Dr. Paul McGarr, <i>Spying in South Asia: Britain, The United States and India's Secret Cold War</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2024) <p>Moderator: Maj Gen RS Yadav, VSM (Retd), Director, USI - CS3</p>
1200 - 1250	<p>ASSAM'S MODERN JOURNEY: HISTORY, CONFLICT, AND THE PURSUIT OF PEACE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, DG Assam Rifles Mr. Rajeev Bhattacharyya, <i>ULFA: The Mirage of Dawn</i> (HarperCollins, 2023) <p>Moderator: Col Vivek Chadha (Retd)</p>	<p>BSF AND BANGLADESH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shri. VK Gaur, Former DIG, BSF Mr. Ushinor Majumdar, <i>India's Secret War: BSF and Nine Months to the Birth of Bangladesh</i> (Penguin, 2023) <p>Moderator: Ms. Nilova Roy Chaudhury</p>
1300 - 1350	LUNCH	
1400 - 1450	<p>VALOUR AND HONOUR: INDIAN ARMY THROUGH THE AGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd), <i>Valour and Honour: Indian Army through the Ages</i> (Pentagon Press, 2024) Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), <i>75 Years of India's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping</i> (Pentagon Press) Lt Gen NS Brar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), <i>Pick of The Army: Guns, Gunners and Mules, The Indian Mountain Artillery, 1851-1985, The Browser Fauji Days, 2023</i> <p>Moderator: Col Mandeep Singh (Retd)</p>	<p>LESSONS AND INSIGHTS FROM THE 1965 INDO-PAK WAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brig Shamsher Singh, AVSM (Retd) Air Mshl VK Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, VrC** (Retd) VAdm (Dr.) AK Chawla, PVSM, AVSM, NM, VSM, ADC, PhD (Retd) <p>Moderator: Mr. KS Nair</p>

TIME (hrs)	AUDITORIUM	SEMINAR ROOM - 1
1500 - 1550	<p>RAIGAD: BATTLEFIELD TRAILS OF A WORLD HERITAGE SITE</p> <p>Special Address: Shri. Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati, Chairperson, Raigad Development Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shri. AK Sinha, Director, ASI (Retd) and Consultant, Raigad Development Authority Ar. Varun Sarjerao Bhamare, Conservation Architect Mr. AR Ramanathan <p>Moderator: Ms. Mandira Nayar</p>	<p>LAW, GOVERNANCE, AND THE ARMED FORCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shivani Dasmahapatra & Maj Navdeep Singh (Retd), In Her Defence: Ten Landmark Judgments on Women in the Armed Forces, Penguin, 2024 Maj Navdeep Singh (Retd), Military Pensions Simplified: Commentary, Case Law and Provisions, The Browser, 2023 <p>Moderator: Lt Gen (Dr) Mukesh Sabharwal, PVSM, AVSM**, VSM, PhD (Retd)</p>
1600 - 1650	<p>RETRACING THE ROOTS OF ASIAN STRATEGIC THOUGHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Rajeev Bhargava, <i>Bridging Two Worlds: Comparing Classical Political Thought and Statecraft in India and China</i> (University of California Press, 2023) Maj Gen Vikrant Deshpande Col Vivek Chadha (Retd), <i>Mahabharata's Strategic Insights: Navigating the Dharmic Compass</i> (Pentagon Press, 2025) <p>Moderator: Dr. Saurabh Mishra</p>	<p>FICTION AS MEMORY: ECHOES OF FREEDOM FROM 1857 TO WORLD WAR II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Rana Safvi, <i>A Firestorm in Paradise: A Novel on the 1857 Uprising</i> (Penguin, 2024) Mr. Vijay Balan, <i>The Swaraj Spy</i> (HarperCollins, 2022) <p>Moderator: Ms. Gillian Wright</p>
1700 - 1730	<p>SPECIAL SESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gen NC Viji, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM (Retd), former Chief of Army Staff, <i>Alone in the Ring: Decision-making in Critical Times</i> (Bloomsbury India, 2025) <p>In conversation with - Air Mshl (Dr.) Rajeev Sachdeva, AVSM, PhD (Retd)</p>	
1730 - 1800	<p>SPECIAL SESSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gen Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Defence Staff, <i>Ready, Relevant and Resurgent: A Blueprint for the Transformation of India's Military</i> (Pentagon Press, 2025) <p>In conversation with - Air Mshl (Dr.) Rajeev Sachdeva, AVSM, PhD (Retd)</p>	
1800 onwards	<p>CLOSING CEREMONY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1800 - 1810 hrs Address by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), DG USI 1810 - 1820 hrs Special Address by Air Mshl Ashutosh Dixit, AVSM, VM, VSM, CISC, President USI Council 1820 - 1825 hrs Release of "1965 War: Commemorative Booklet" 1825 - 1845 hrs Keynote Address: Gen Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Defence Staff, Chief Guest 1845 - 1850 hrs Vote of Thanks by Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, MBE (Retd), Director, USI - CMHCS 1855 hrs Onwards Band Presentation 	

CHIEF GUEST
Special Session



Thiru. R.N. Ravi,
Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu

Thiru. R. N. Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu, is a distinguished public servant with over four decades of experience in national security, governance, and conflict resolution. A 1976 batch IPS officer (Kerala Cadre) and former Deputy National Security Advisor, he has held key roles in the CBI and Intelligence Bureau, leading major operations against corruption, organized crime, and insurgencies across Jammu & Kashmir, the Northeast, and Maoist-affected regions. As the Centre's Interlocutor for the Naga peace talks, he achieved a breakthrough by bringing insurgent groups into the democratic mainstream. He later served as Governor of Nagaland (2019-2021) before assuming office as the 26th Governor of Tamil Nadu. A former Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, he is widely recognized for his contributions to counter-terrorism cooperation, intelligence reforms, and peacebuilding in India's conflict zones.

CHIEF GUEST
Inauguration Ceremony



Shri. Sanjay Seth
Hon'ble Raksha Rajya Mantri

Shri. Sanjay Seth is the Hon'ble Minister of State for Defence, Government of India, and a two-term Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing Ranchi, Jharkhand. A seasoned public leader with over four decades of experience in social service and governance, he has played a pivotal role in advancing community welfare and industrial development in Jharkhand. Prior to his ministerial role, he served as Chairman, Jharkhand State Khadi Village Industries Board, and was twice a Member of the Local Board, State Bank of India (Bihar–Jharkhand). A graduate in commerce with postgraduate and law qualifications, he has been a lifelong member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, contributing actively to organisational and social initiatives. Shri Seth has launched impactful programmes such as the Nammo Book Bank, Nammo Toy Bank, and Nammo E-Library, aimed at promoting education, digital literacy, and social empowerment across rural and urban communities.

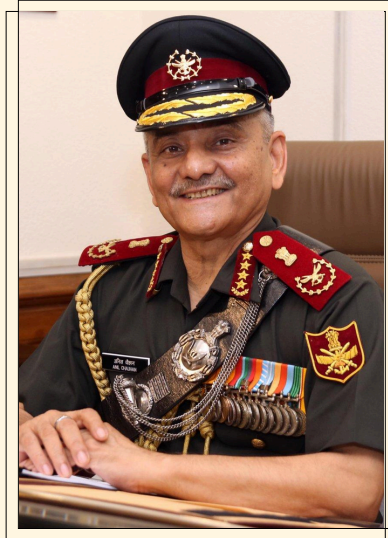
SPECIAL GUEST



Shri. Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati, Chairperson, Raigad Development Authority

Shri. Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati is a distinguished public figure, social reformer, and former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), widely respected for his commitment to social justice, cultural preservation, and public welfare. A direct descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he represents the 13th generation of the illustrious Maratha lineage, carrying forward a proud legacy of leadership, courage, and service. Nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 2016 by the President of India, Shri Sambhajiraje actively raised issues related to education, rural development, youth empowerment, and cultural conservation. A prominent voice for the Maratha community, he led the movement for equitable access to education and employment through constitutional and peaceful means. As the Head of the Raigad Development Authority, he oversees the restoration and revitalization of Raigad Fort - the coronation site of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj - ensuring its preservation as a symbol of Maharashtra's cultural pride. His initiatives promote heritage conservation, sustainable tourism, and youth engagement with India's rich history. Beyond politics, he continues to champion philanthropy in education, healthcare, and skill development. Shri Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati embodies humility, integrity, and foresight - values that inspire generations to contribute to nation-building while upholding the timeless Maratha ethos of courage and service.

SPEAKER & CHIEF GUEST
Closing Ceremony



General Anil Chauhan
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

General Anil Chauhan is the current Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces, serving since September 30, 2022. A four-star general with nearly 40 years of service, he has extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and North-East India. Born on May 18, 1961, he was commissioned into the 11 Gorkha Rifles in 1981. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy, he commanded an Infantry Division in Baramulla, a corps in the North East, and the Eastern Command from September 2019 until his retirement in May 2021. He has also served as Director General of Military Operations and participated in a UN mission to Angola. General Chauhan's distinguished service has earned him the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal, and Vishisht Seva Medal.

SPECIAL GUEST



Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit **AVSM, VSM, VM** **CISC and President USI Council**

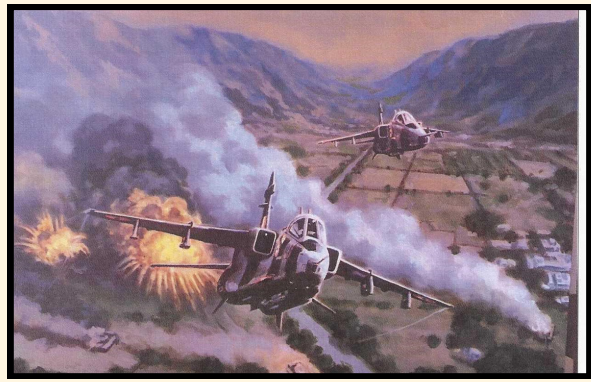
Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, AVSM, VM, VSM, is a serving officer of the Indian Air Force. He is currently serving as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College (Bangladesh), and National Defence College, he was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force on December 6, 1986. He was extensively involved in operations and exercises, including Op Safed Sagar and Op Rakshak. As a commanding officer, he re-equipped one of the IAF's squadrons with the cutting-edge Mirage-2000 fighter aircraft. He also commanded a premier fighter training centre in the Southern Sector and a front-line fighter air base in the Western Sector. He has worked as a directing staff at the Air Force Test Pilots School and held the staff appointment of Principal Director (Air Staff Requirements) at Air Headquarters. He has also served as Southern Air Command's Air Defence Commander, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Projects), and Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Plans) at Air Headquarters. As Deputy Chief of Air Staff at Air Headquarters, he was instrumental in advancing the defence forces' Atmanirbharta (self-reliance). Several indigenous aircraft programs such as the LCA Mark-1A, Mark-2 and AMCA have also advanced significantly during his term. The Air Marshal oversaw a number of key initiatives, focused on future technologies and ensuring that the IAF achieves modernisation while maintaining a steady focus on 'Atmanirbhar'.

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

EXHIBITION - PORTRAITS OF VALOUR

Military Paintings of Lt Col Arul Raj

This exhibition showcases the defining works of Lieutenant Colonel Arul Raj, a soldier-artist whose canvases capture the spirit of India's armed forces through service, sacrifice, and duty. Drawing on lived experience, his art looks beyond conflict to reveal calm, discipline, and resilience. Featuring portraits, battle scenes, and moments from India's defence history, the collection forms a visual chronicle of courage and continuity. By translating history into art, it preserves memory and honours those who serve. Lt Col Arul Raj's paintings remind us that valour is timeless - alive in every act of duty, in war and in peace.



ABOUT THE ARTIST



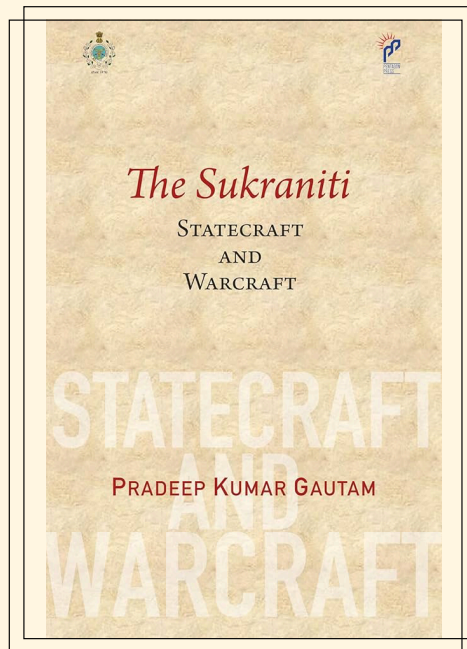
Lt Col Arul Raj (Retd)

Arogyaswamy Joseph Arul Raj was born in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, in 1947. His parents, Cdr S. Arogyaswami, a Naval officer, and Rose Swami, a homemaker, were simple people. He has three brothers and two sisters. From childhood, he was a born artist with no formal training, who loved to sketch, draw cartoons, and depict war scenes from illustrated battle books, particularly World War I and II. He completed his schooling at St. Columba's, New Delhi. An average student, his mother encouraged his artistry. During school, he participated in Shankar's Art Competition and was felicitated by Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President Radhakrishnan, and US Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith. He joined the National Defence Academy at Khandakwasla and was commissioned into the Artillery from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, as a Second Lieutenant in 1969. As an Artillery Officer, he saw action in the 1971 War at Longewala with the 185 Light Regiment. The Battle of Longewala marked the beginning of his Military Art career. While posted in Binnaguri, his Corps Commander, Lt Gen Harish Rai, felt his art should be showcased and organised an exhibition in Delhi in 1974. His military paintings soon appeared in various Defence messes. He was personally commissioned by Presidents Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy to create portraits for Rashtrapati Bhavan. At the insistence of Army Chief General OP Malhotra, he held another exhibition in 1979. Admiral Jal Cursetji, the Naval Chief, asked him to document decommissioned Naval ships, followed by Admiral R. Pereira, who encouraged him in sea painting. He is married to Nalini, a school principal in Noida, and they have two children: Prashant, a financial consultant in New York, and Karishma, a Graphic/Commercial artist in Noida. His passion for caricatures, cartoons, portraits, and battle paintings culminates in this beautiful book and exhibition.

BOOK LAUNCH

Col P. K. Gautam (Retd),

***The Sukraniti: Statecraft And Warcraft, Pentagon
Press LLP, 2025, ISBN 978-81-984458-1-0***

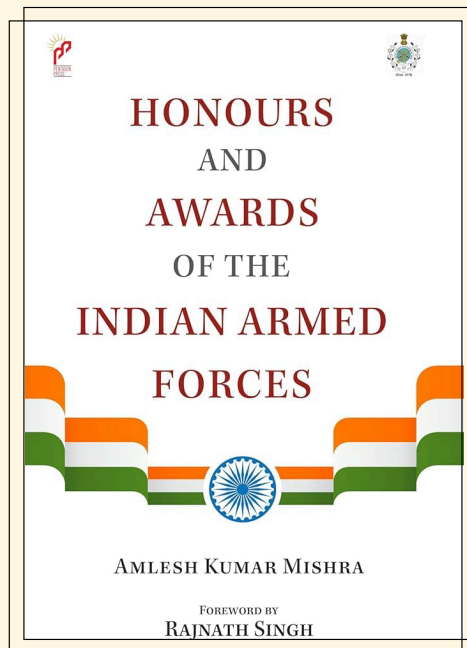


The Sukraniti: Statecraft and Warcraft by Colonel Pradeep Kumar Gautam is a scholarly exploration of one of India's classical treatises on governance, military science, and ethics. Drawing from the ancient text *Sukraniti*, traditionally attributed to Shukracharya, the work examines its relevance to contemporary political thought, strategy, and administration. Colonel Gautam, a distinguished soldier-scholar, contextualizes the *Sukraniti* within India's intellectual and strategic traditions, highlighting its nuanced understanding of statecraft, diplomacy, defence planning, and moral conduct in leadership. The book bridges ancient Indian wisdom with modern strategic studies, offering insights into indigenous concepts of power, governance, and security. Through meticulous analysis and commentary, it underscores that the principles of effective leadership and ethical governance remain timeless, reaffirming India's rich legacy in political and military thought.

BOOK LAUNCH

Dr. AK Mishra,

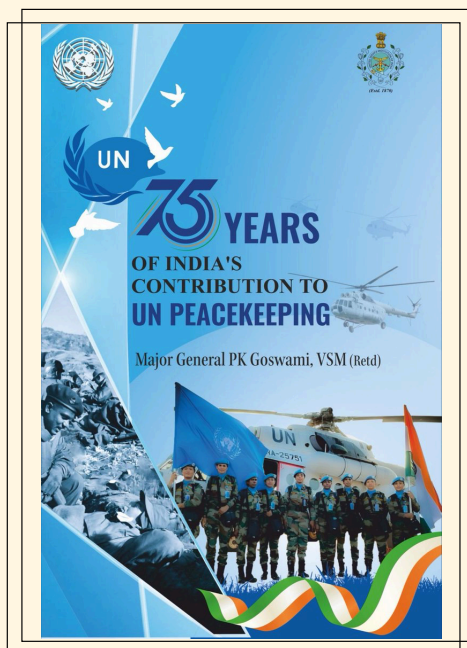
Honours and Awards of the Indian Armed Forces,
Pentagon Press LLP, 2025, ISBN 978-81-980002-0-0



Honouring the brave is an old universal tradition. India has also been following this system. In ancient India, heavenly bliss and earthly pleasures motivated the braves. During Medieval period gallantry was rewarded in many ways but rewarding the brave by conferring decorations and medals has been introduced in India by British. When India become a Republic, it continued to follow the British tradition and instituted many decorations and medals. Now, the President of India, Service Chiefs or GoCs-in-Cs of the Command confer 15 gallantry and distinguished service awards on the Indian Armed Forces personnel. These awards are conferred for gallantry in the face of the enemy, for gallantry other than in the face of the enemy and for devotion to duty. Some distinguished service awards are also conferred on Service Officers for displaying exceptional leadership qualities. Certain gallantry awards can also be conferred on the civilians. The book attempts to describe these awards so that people know about the gallant deeds of Indian soldiers.

BOOK LAUNCH

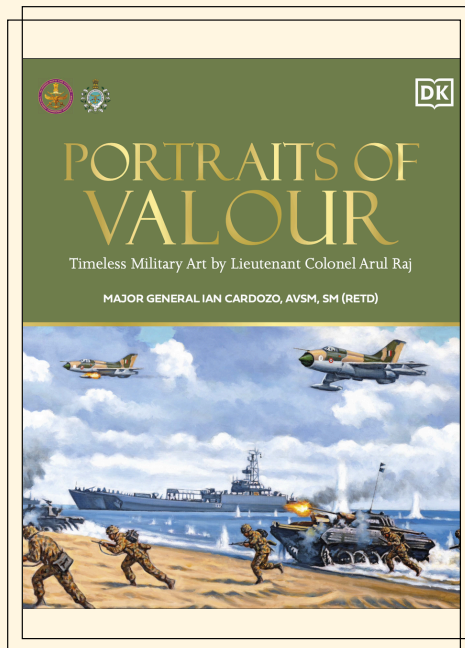
Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd),
75 Years of India's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping,
Pentagon Press LLP, 2025, ISBN 978-81-991162-5-2



The USI Centre for UN Studies (CUNS), has always taken the lead in providing a platform for organising discourse and research in the field of United Nations (UN) peace operations, to put across an Indian perspective on crucial attributes of the contemporary challenges faced by UN peace operations. To this end, Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), Director, Centre for UN Studies has briefly collated the *75Years of Indian contribution to UN Peacekeeping*, starting from the Korean War in 1950, till date. This book seeks to chronicle India's rich and multifaceted peacekeeping journey, analysing its impact, challenges, and evolving role; and aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of India's role in peacekeeping over the past 75 years.

BOOK LAUNCH

Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd),
Portraits of Valour: Timeless Military Art by
Lieutenant Colonel Arul Raj,
DK India, ISBN 978-81-9822-733-1



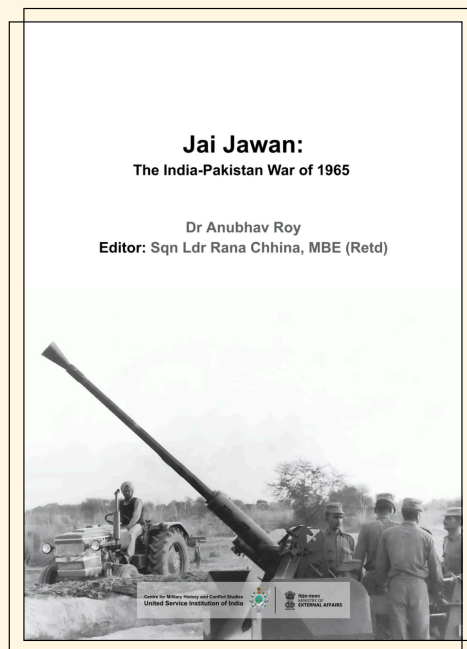
In the evening of 22 October 2025, the United Service Institution of India (USI), the country's oldest defence think-tank established in 1870, had the privilege of hosting the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM as the Chief Guest for the launch of *Portraits of Valour: The Timeless Military Art by Lt Col Arul Raj*, a coffee-table book authored by Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd) and published by DK Publishers. The Chief of Army Staff, Gen Upendra Dwivedi, was present with him on stage as a Guest of Honour. The book is a mesmerizing, kaleidoscopic collection of paintings that capture the watershed moments and stellar achievements of the armed forces and martial leaders of India, from those of the 19th century to Operation Sindoor. It also features life-like portraits of legendary military chiefs and gallantry awardees. All artistic representations featured in the premium coffee-table book are products of the intellectual and aesthetic brilliance of Lt Col Arul Raj (Retd), India's most regarded military painter, whose iconic works adorn the walls of some of the highest offices of the country.

BOOK LAUNCH

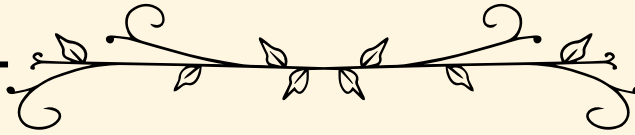
Dr. Anubhav Roy

Jai Jawan: The India-Pakistan War of 1965,

USI Publication

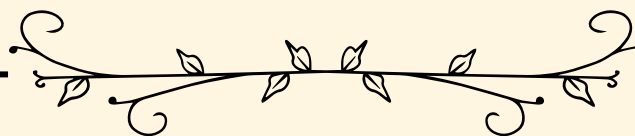


Jai Jawan: The India-Pakistan War of 1965 (New Delhi: USI, 2025) is a concise chronicle of the India-Pakistan War of 1965. While intended as an introductory primer, this latest USI publication is populated with informative and intriguing details of the war - from its backdrop to its impact, its tactics to its politics, its major battles to its key figures, - making it a useful read for the uninitiated and the acquainted, the young and the seasoned. It takes a holistic view of the watershed conflict, covering the role and responses of a wide range of actors. The publication, supported by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, forms part of the USI's larger initiative to mark the diamond jubilee (60th anniversary) of the War of 1965.



SESSIONS

DAY - 1



**OPERATION SINDOOR :
CATALYSING
*ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT***



The first panel discussion of IMHF 2025 will open with a defining theme - Op Sindoor. More than a strike, it was a statement. It marked India's decisive shift to a "zero-tolerance" policy on terrorism, making it clear that threats from across the border would invite a swift and strong response, shaped on our own terms, with or without global support. This session will explore how that bold stand catalysed India's march towards self-reliance and strategic autonomy, reshaping India's approach to conflict and its conduct of diplomacy - blending power with prudence and will with wisdom. It will highlight how Op Sindoor ignited indigenous capability development, bolstered defence preparedness and strengthened the path to *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. It will highlight the seamless synergy of the tri-services, vital in countering hybrid threats such as terrorism, cyber sabotage, and cross-border incursions. It will also examine the other side of the coin - the face of diplomacy and its evolution along with the Armed Forces. From ground operations to global negotiations, the discussion will showcase how India balances indigenous power with international partnerships, combining military might with technological self-reliance. Op Sindoor is not just a chapter of the past; it is a marker of transformation - revealing how India strides forward with strength, self-sufficiency and strategy, fusing force with finesse to secure an *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

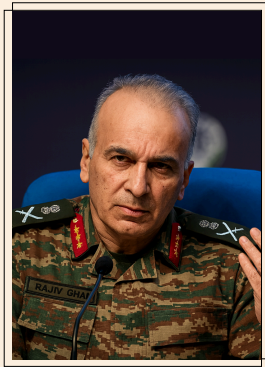
MODERATOR



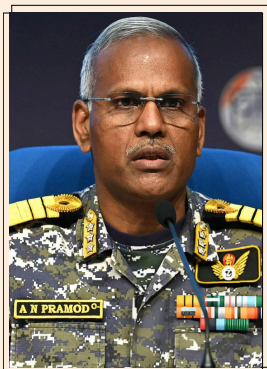
**Maj Gen BK Sharma,
AVSM, SM** (Retd),
DG, USI of India**

Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd) is an Infantry Veteran with rich operational experience and expertise in strategic affairs and multi-domain warfare. He is the incumbent Director General of the United Service Institution of India (USI). He was conferred three military awards by the President of India for exceptional service and courage, and a national award for nation-building from the Confederation of Educational Excellence in 2017. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Defence Services Staff College, Higher Command and National Defence College. He trained in International Peacekeeping in Santiago (Chile). He has held prestigious command, Instructional and staff appointments at the Ministry of Defence. He has represented his country as a UN Military Observer in Central America and has been India's Defence Attaché in Central Asia. He specialises in Strategic Net Assessment, Scenario Building, Strategic Gaming and Red Teaming. He has been part of key international conferences including those by the UN, OSCE, SCO Forum, BRICS Forum, Eurasian Economic Forum, and other regional forums - while also editing books, publishing seminal papers, and regularly participating in Track-1.5 dialogues.

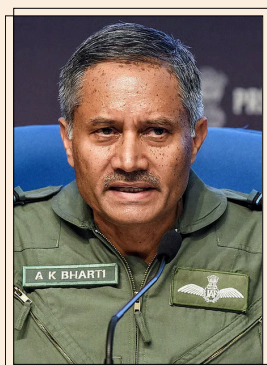
PANELISTS



Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai,
SYSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM*,**
DCOAS (Strategy)



VAdm AN Pramod,
AVSM, YSM, DGNO



Air Mrshl Awadesh Kumar Bharti,
SYSM, AVSM, VM, DCAS

Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, an alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, was commissioned into the Kumaon Regiment on 16 Dec 1989. He is a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Higher Command Course, and National Defence College. He has extensive experience in conventional and counter-terror operations, commanding an infantry battalion, independent brigade, division, and 15 Corps on the LAC and Line of Control. He spearheaded Op Sindoor, served as official MoD spokesperson, and was pivotal in Op Snow Leopard (Galwan) 2020. He has also served in UN missions, key staff appointments, and currently, he is Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) since Aug 2025. He has been awarded the rare SYSM, UYSM, AVSM, Sena Medal thrice, along with CISC and VCOAS commendations.

VAdm AN Pramod an alumnus of the Naval Academy, Goa, and a CAT 'A' Sea King Air Operations Officer as well as a Communication and Electronic Warfare Specialist, assumed charge as Director General Naval Operations on 15 Jan 2024. Commissioned into the Indian Navy on 1 July 1990, he has commanded INS *Abhay*, INS *Shardul*, and INS *Satpura*, and served as Fleet Operations Officer, Western Fleet. His distinguished shore appointments include Deputy Commandant, Indian Naval Academy, ACNS (Air), Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area, and Directing Staff at DSSC Wellington. A graduate of DSSC Wellington and Naval War College, Goa, he has also contributed to strategic forums such as the Indian Strategic & Operational Council (INSOC) and Tactical Audit Group (TAG).

Air Marshal AK Bharti is a distinguished officer of the Indian Air Force, commissioned into the fighter stream in 1987. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, DSSC Wellington, and the National Defence College, New Delhi, he is a qualified Fighter Combat Leader and accomplished Su-30MKI pilot. Over a career spanning more than three decades, Air Marshal Bharti has commanded a frontline fighter squadron and an operational air base, showcasing exceptional leadership in air operations and personnel management. He has also held key appointments, including Senior Air Staff Officer, Central Air Command, and Director General of Air Operations at Air Headquarters. Under his leadership, the IAF enhanced its operational readiness and strategic outreach, notably during missions such as Operation Sindoor.

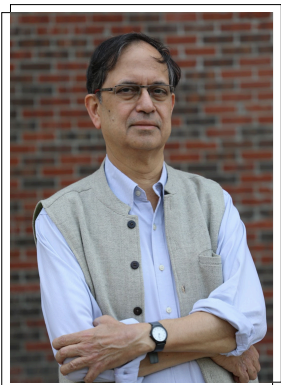
Session - 2A
14th November, 2025, Friday
1145-1230 Hrs

THE WAR THAT INDIA FORGOT - I



Some wars are celebrated and remembered, while others slip into silence. The Second World War is one such forgotten chapter in India, despite the immense sacrifices it demanded and the millions who took part in it. This session returns to that forgotten front, through two powerful books that recover memory, meaning and missed histories. Dr. Diya Gupta's - *India in the Second World War: An Emotional History*, looks beyond battles and strategies to uncover the emotions of the time. Drawing from letters, poems, diaries and memoirs, she brings alive - sepoys yearning for home, doctors disillusioned at the front, poets writing of hunger, and thinkers questioning empire. Her work reveals how feelings of loyalty, loss and longing shaped the wartime experience. Mukund Padmanabhan's - *The Great Flap of 1942*, captures a climate of fear when rumours of a Japanese invasion gripped the subcontinent. With panic in the streets, whispers in the air and exodus across coasts, he shows how the British Raj fuelled alarm, and how that frenzy reshaped politics, power and the path to independence. Together, they will remind us that the war was not only fought on faraway frontlines, but also within hearts, homes and hopes - a conflict remembered less, but deserving to be retold.

MODERATOR



Prof Indivar Kamtekar

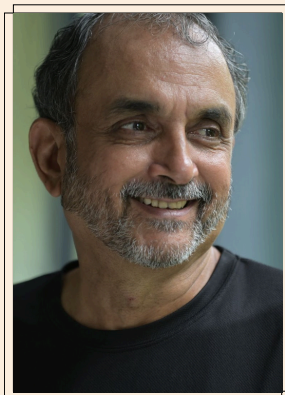
Prof Indivar Kamtekar is a Visiting Professor at Ashoka University in India. For most of his career, he taught modern history at the Centre for Historical Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Among other places, he has taught at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta; the National University of Singapore; and the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. In Germany, he has been a visiting professor at the University of Goettingen and Heidelberg University. The focus of his research is British colonial state power. Beginning with his PhD at Cambridge University, some of his writings have emphasized the multi-faceted transformations during the 1940s because of the Second World War, Independence, and the Partition of India. He has been a member of the editorial board of the journals - Modern Asian Studies, and has edited the journal studies in history.

PANELISTS



Dr. Diya Gupta

*India in the Second World War:
An Emotional History,*
Oxford University Press, 2023



Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan

*The Great Flap of 1942:
How the Raj Panicked over a
Japanese Non-Invasion,*
Vintage Books, 2024

Dr. Diya Gupta is a Senior Lecturer in Public History at City St George's, University of London, UK. Her first book, *India in the Second World War: An Emotional History*, was shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society's 2024 Gladstone Prize. Her current research project examines the nature of wartime violence as it turns inwards, targeting colonised civilian bodies, studied through the lens of the 1943 Bengal Famine.

Philosophy at Krea University, north of Chennai. He has been teaching there since 2019. For most of his working life, he has been a journalist, ending his career as the Editor of *The Hindu*. Prior to that, he was the Editor of *The Hindu Business Line*. Among the publications he has worked for are - *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* in Chennai and *Sunday Magazine* in Calcutta. Mukund has written extensively on politics, legal affairs and literature during his time as a journalist. Mukund worked briefly as a lecturer in Hindu College, Delhi University, before turning to journalism. He was also an Adjunct Faculty at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, where he taught law and advanced writing to post-graduate students. *The Great Flap*

Session - 2B
14th November, 2025, Friday
1145-1230 Hrs

THE FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA'S STRATEGIC AUTONOMY



Strategic Autonomy - the ability to act independently while engaging globally - has been the cornerstone of India's foreign policy since its earliest years. This session traces those foundations, exploring how vision, values and voices came together to shape the nation's place in the world. Kallol Bhattacharjee's *Nehru's First Recruits*, captures the remarkable stories of India's pioneering diplomats who carried the country's message abroad. From initiating dialogue with rivals and navigating crises, to shaping the very culture of diplomacy in a young republic, their work laid the ground for India's confident global engagement. Aditya Mukherjee's *Nehru's India: Past, Present & Future*, reflects on the principles that guided these efforts - democracy, secularism, equality and scientific temper - ideals that defined not just Nehru's vision but the broader ethos of independent India. Together, these narratives reveal how early leadership and diplomacy built the architecture of India's strategic autonomy. Amidst alliances, rivalries and the pressures of taking sides, India has continued to balance its relationships with care and confidence. This session will emphasize how that legacy still guides the present and will shape the future - where sovereignty and strategy, power and principle, autonomy and aspiration remain at the heart of India's global journey.

MODERATOR



Amb. TCA Raghavan,
IFS (Retd)

Amb. TCA Raghavan is a former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan (2013-15). He had earlier served as Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan (2003-2007) and High Commissioner to Singapore from 2009 to 2013. He was Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi from 2018 to 2021. He was awarded a PhD by the Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1992 for his dissertation relating to the economic history of India. He is a member of the Governing Council of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, Adjunct Professor, School of Conflict and Security Studies, National Institute of Advanced Study, Bangalore and Visiting Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is a recipient of the Jadunath Sarkar Gold Medal for 2024 by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. He is also the author of several acclaimed books on history and diplomacy.

PANELISTS



Prof. Aditya Mukherjee

*Nehru's India:
Past, Present & Future,*
Penguin, 2024

Professor Aditya Mukherjee is a distinguished historian of modern and contemporary India, noted for his work on the political economy of colonialism and post-colonial development. He taught for over four decades at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Historical Studies, retiring in 2018, while continuing to contribute actively to academia and public discourse. Educated at St. Xavier's School, Delhi, and St. Stephen's College, he later earned his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. in History from JNU, with a direct promotion to Ph.D. for exceptional performance. He held key roles including Chairperson of the Centre (2004-06), Director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study (2006-12), Dean of Social Sciences (2013-15), and Director of the Academic Staff College (1997-2004). His acclaimed works include *India's Struggle for Independence*, *India After Independence*, *Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class*, and *RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi*. He has over 50 scholarly articles, held fellowships worldwide, served on global editorial boards, and was elected General President of the Indian History Congress for the term 2023-2024.



Mr. Kallol Bhattacharjee

*Nehru's First Recruits:
The Diplomats Who Built
Independent India's Foreign
Policy,*
HarperCollins India, 2024

Tripura-born Kallol Bhattacharjee grew up in the hills of Northeast India, where he had his first glimpse of India's relentless interaction with the world. In the mid-1990s, on a summer day, he boarded the Kalka Mail from Calcutta (now Kolkata) – a move that eventually led him to the classrooms of the University of Delhi and subsequently to Jawaharlal Nehru University, where he studied political theory, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the history of modern Lebanon. He began his journalistic career writing for Mainstream, Seminar, The Jerusalem Post, The Indian Express, and the Iranian News Agency. Over the past two decades, he has worked at The Week and The Hindu, where he is currently a senior assistant editor, reporting and writing on international affairs. Over the years, he has reported from conflict zones around the world, including Libya, Tunisia, Syria and Iraq at the height of the Arab Spring, and from India's neighbourhood. He is the author of *The Great Game in Afghanistan: Rajiv Gandhi, General Zia and the Unending War* (2017) and *A Baloch Militant in Delhi* (2018).

SPECIAL SESSION

PUBLIC RELEASE OF CTB
‘PORTRAITS OF VALOUR’



Thiru. R. N. Ravi,
Hon'ble Governor of
Tamil Nadu

Thiru. R.N. Ravi, born in Patna, Bihar, holds a Master's degree in Physics (1974) and joined the Indian Police Service in 1976. During his distinguished career, he served in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB), leading anti-corruption drives and working in Jammu & Kashmir, the North-East, and Maoist-affected regions. Renowned for his expertise in conflict resolution, counter-terrorism, and border sociology, he played a key role in bringing several insurgent groups into the national mainstream. After retirement, he became Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Interlocutor for the Naga Peace Talks (2014), and later Deputy National Security Advisor (2018). As Governor of Nagaland (2019-2021) and currently the 26th Governor of Tamil Nadu (since 2021), he has revitalised Tamil Nadu's literary, cultural, and spiritual heritage, supported research on unsung freedom fighters, and promoted Tamil language education. Under his leadership, Raj Bhavan has become a hub for youth engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship, and social service, celebrating Tamil Nadu's ancient wisdom while inspiring progress through education and enterprise.

Session - 4A
14th November, 2025, Friday
1400-1450 Hrs

THE WAR THAT INDIA FORGOT - II



History often remembers the thunder of great battles, but some stories slip between the shadows of history, remembered neither in textbooks nor in tales. The Second World War in India's Northeast is one such story - fought in forests and foothills, endured in villages and valleys, shaping lives and legacies that still echo today. The courage and contribution of India's North East remains largely forgotten. This session brings those untold tales back into focus, tracing both the struggles of ordinary lives and the sacrifices on forgotten frontlines. Dr. Sima Saigal's *The Second World War and North East India: Shadows of Yesteryears*, uncovers the hidden history of Assam and the wider region. Beyond the battlefields of Kohima and Imphal, she explores how the war reshaped politics, economy and society - from the mobilisation of resources and the strain of famine, to the voices of leaders and the resilience of communities navigating turmoil. On the other hand, David Allison's *Fight Your Way Out: The Siege of Sangshak*, captures a gripping battlefield story. In March 1944, a young parachute brigade, underprepared yet unbroken, stood its ground against relentless Japanese assaults in the hills of Manipur. Their desperate defence and daring escape bought precious time that changed the course of the campaign. This session shall highlight how the forgotten war in the North East was not only about battles and bravery, but also about survival, sacrifice and the shaping of society - reminding us why these stories must be remembered.

MODERATOR



Dr. Peter Johnston

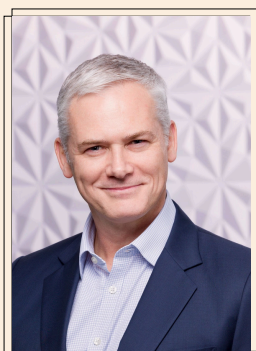
Dr. Peter Johnston serves as the Director of Narrative & Content at the Imperial War Museum, where he oversees the development of compelling stories and educational content related to military history and war experiences. With a deep expertise in curating historical narratives, Dr. Johnston plays a key role in shaping the museum's exhibitions, publications, and multimedia projects. His work is central to engaging diverse audiences, ensuring that the museum's collections and resources effectively communicate the profound impact of conflict on societies, individuals, and global history.

PANELISTS



Dr. Sima Saigal

***The Second World War and
North East India:
Shadows of Yesteryears,***
Routledge India, 2024



Mr. David Allison

***Fight Your Way Out:
The Siege of Sangshak,***
Pen and Sword Military, 2023

Dr. Sima Saigal has been with NERIE–NCERT for nearly 19 years, actively contributing to research, development, and teacher training initiatives. She has authored articles for NCERT publications and teaches in the institute’s B.Ed. program. In 2024, she launched a history blog addressing educational and pedagogical issues in line with NEP 2020. A specialist in modern and contemporary history, her research focuses on the impact of war and conflict on society. Her book *The Second World War and North East India: Shadows of Yesteryears* (Routledge, 2022) received wide acclaim. She is currently working on *The Making of Contemporary Assam: 1950–1980*.

David Allison is a distinguished military historian, lawyer, and soldier with a deep interest in the history of Commonwealth forces in Asia from the Second World War to the present. His acclaimed first book, *Fight Your Way Out*, recounts the heroic stand of the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade at Sangshak in 1944. His latest work, *The Fire Brigade*, examines the experiences of Commonwealth troops during the early months of the Korean War. Combining scholarship with service, he brings a unique perspective to the study of campaigns, leadership, and the shared military heritage of the Commonwealth.

**FUTURE CONFLICTS & STRATEGIC
HORIZONS: NAVIGATING EMERGING
THREATS AND GREY ZONE CHALLENGES
FOR INDIA**



The wars of tomorrow may not begin with booming guns or blazing borders, they may start with a silent cyber strike, a swarm of drones in the sky, a subtle surge of disinformation, or a disruption in critical networks. As conflict moves from the conventional to the complex, India must prepare for a future where the battlefield is everywhere - land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. This session explores how technology and geo-politics are together transforming the character of war. Artificial intelligence, quantum leaps and machine learning are reshaping multi-domain operations, while cyber intrusions and space disruptions blur the lines between peace and war. At the same time, “grey zone” tactics - deniable, deceptive, and difficult to detect - are being used by rivals to test India’s patience and probe its power without triggering open conflict. This session will emphasize on how India can navigate this uncertain horizon - by anticipating threats, adapting strategies, building integrated institutions and adopting a whole-of-nation approach. It will highlight how strength and subtlety, foresight and flexibility, must combine if India is to stay secure amidst shifting storms and testing times.

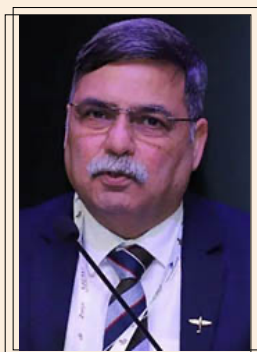
MODERATOR



**Maj Gen (Dr.) SB Asthana,
SM, VSM, PhD (Retd),
Director, Courses, USI**

Globally acknowledged Strategic and Security Analyst, Ph.D. from JNU, has authored over 450 publications. Veteran Infantry General with 45 years of experience at national and varied international fields and United Nations. Former Director General Infantry in Indian Army. Director Courses, USI of India, the oldest think tank of India, conducting largest online & correspondence courses for Indian military officers since last 10 years. TV commentator having participated in over 4000 TV shows globally. Speaker in various Strategic, Military forums, UN Organisations, Think tanks and Universities, globally. Interviewed by various National and International news channels/ newspapers/ organisations on strategic, military and UN related subjects. On Advisory Board of Global Advisors Consultants Corporation, IOED representative in UN Headquarters, Vienna, Austria. Distinguished Expert, Bharat Centre of Canada. Member Norway based UN organization-Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON). Former member Expert Group Challenges Forum, Sweden. Awarded twice by President of India, twice by UN, CEE excellence award for Nation building by Governor of Haryana.

PANELISTS



**Air Vice Mshl Anil Golani (Retd),
DG, CAPSS**

*Asian Defence Review 2024:
Emerging Technologies &
Changing Dimensions of Threats
for India*

KW Publishers, 2024



**Lt Gen Dushyant Singh,
PVSM, AVSM (Retd), DG, CLAWS**

*Grey Zone Warfare:
Way Ahead for India,*
Vij Books, 2023



**Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd),
Director Editorial, USI**

*USI Strategic Year Book 2025,
United Service Institution of India,
2025*

Air Marshal Air Vice Mshl Anil Golani (Retd) was commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF in December 1982 and is a Qualified Flying Instructor and Instrument Rating Instructor & Examiner, operational on the Ajeet and Jaguar aircraft. He raised and commanded the IAF's first Harpy Squadron, besides commanding an Air Defence Direction Centre and an operational base. Among the few to have served in both Joint Services Commands, he held senior roles at ANC and SFC. Since superannuation in 2019, he has written extensively on air power and national security. He is presently the Additional Director General, CAPSS.

Lt Gen Dushyant Singh (Retd) was commissioned into the Maratha Light Infantry in 1981. An alumnus of NDC, DSSC, CDM, and the Naval Postgraduate School, USA, he specialised in counter-terrorism and terrorist financing. He commanded an Infantry Battalion, Brigade, Division, and Corps in Jammu & Kashmir, and served twice with the National Security Guards as IG (Ops) and DIG (Ops). His key staff roles included Chief of Staff, Eastern Command, and Head, Army War College. A prolific writer on terrorism and strategy, he is Vice Chairman, STRIVE India Think Tank, and Professor Emeritus, Rashtriya Raksha University.

Maj Gen Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd) served with distinction in the Indian Army for over 37 years (1984-2021) in the Regiment of Artillery, holding key command and staff appointments in operational and strategic domains. He was an instructor at the Special Frontier Force Academy and Defence Services Staff College, and served as a UN Military Observer in Sierra Leone. His last posting was as Additional Director General Movements, overseeing tri-service logistics. Post-retirement, he serves as Director Editorial, USI of India, and is active in career counselling and community initiatives. An avid photographer and philatelist, he views this phase as "give-back time".

THE WAR THAT INDIA FORGOT - III



In the early 1940s, far from the heartland, Indian soldiers found themselves in unfamiliar lands. Some manned distant guns in Hong Kong and Singapore as part of the Royal Artillery, defending skies and shores in battles few remember. Others were marched into prison camps under Japanese control, where hunger, hard labour, and harsh captivity tested their spirit. From the hills of Palestine to the jungles of Burma, their service stretched across continents. Many held their ground until they were overrun; some became part of the first Indian National Army even before Subhash Chandra Bose arrived and others endured years of suffering in camps - surviving starvation, brutal punishments, and the long silence of waiting families. Thousands died of sickness and exhaustion in Burma, only a few staged daring escapes. Many never returned, and families at home waited long years for news that never came. This session will illuminate on how these neglected narratives of artillerymen abroad and prisoners in captivity add depth to India's wartime experience - reminding us that even in defeat and despair, their courage hastened freedom and deserves remembrance. Their stories, scattered across archives and fading memories, form the heart of this session.

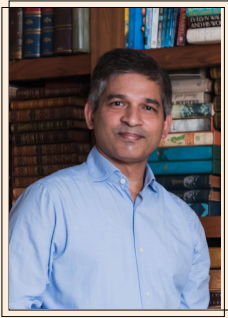
MODERATOR



Mr. Julian Farrance

Julian Farrance is a career employee of the National Army Museum, working there since 2000. Initially in the education team, he spent three years in the communication team and has worked as the lead for the Museum's liaison with the UK's Regimental and Corps Museums for the last eleven years (with additional responsibility for International partnerships) In this role, Julian provides direct support, training, advice and networking administration for the UK's one hundred and forty five museums.

PANELISTS



Mr. Gautam Hazarika

*The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of
World War II – Surviving Hell
Under the Japanese*
Penguin and Pen & Sword, 2025



Dr. Peter Johnston, IWM Team



Mr. Adrian Kerrison, IWM Team



Col Singh (Retd)

*Forgotten: History of Hong Kong
Singapore Royal Artillery,*
Pentagon Press, 2025

Gautam Hazarika, a Singapore-based researcher, transitioned from a career in banking to studying World War II in Southeast Asia, focusing on the Indian Army, the anti-Japanese resistance, and war crimes trials. He has presented his work at museums in Singapore and WWII conferences in the UK, and has been published in *BiblioAsia*, *Business Times*, *Scroll.in*, *Arts of Asia*, *The Book Collector*, and journals of the MVG and SEALG. His first book, *The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of World War II*, published in 2025 by Penguin (India) and Pen & Sword (UK) has also been featured in a Channel News Asia documentary.

Dr. Peter Johnston is the Director of Narrative & Content at the Imperial War Museum (IWM), London, where he leads the development of stories and educational content on military history and war experiences. With expertise in curating historical narratives, he shapes the museum's exhibitions, publications, and multimedia projects, ensuring their historical depth and public resonance. His work focuses on engaging diverse audiences and highlighting the human, social, and global dimensions of conflict. Through his leadership, the IWM continues to be a leading institution in interpreting and preserving the heritage of war and its impact on society.

Adrian Kerrison is a Senior Curator in the Second World War & Mid-Twentieth Century Conflict team at IWM Duxford. He has curated major exhibitions, including *Spitfire: Evolution of an Icon* and *Hangar 4: Battle of Britain*, and authored an IWM publication on the *Supermarine Spitfire*. An American at Duxford, he is passionate about highlighting the stories of US Army and Air Force personnel who served there during the war. He has acquired key 78th Fighter Group collections for the museum and will speak on their role in 'Operation Overlord', flying P-47 Thunderbolts from Duxford in 1944.

Colonel Singh (Retd), an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, was commissioned into the Air Defence branch of the Regiment of Artillery in 1982. A graduate of the Long Gunnery Staff Course and Defence Services Staff College, he commanded his regiment during Operation Parakram and along the Line of Actual Control. With over 150 publications and 15 books, he writes extensively on military history, air defence, and strategy. His major works include the *Air Defence in Combat* series and the *History of the Hong Kong Singapore Royal Artillery*. His forthcoming titles explore India's military campaigns from 1947 to 1999.

POLITICAL ISLAM ACROSS TIME AND BORDERS



What happens when faith and politics travel together across time and terrain? From Medinah's modest beginnings to the shifting maps of modern geopolitics, the idea of Political Islam has shaped societies, stirred movements, and sparked debates that still echo today. In this session, Dr. Adil Rasheed takes us through this remarkable journey as presented in his acclaimed work, *Political Islam: Parallel Currents in West Asia and South Asia*. Though Islam itself prescribes no political philosophy or state system, scholars and sages have long sought to shape ideals of governance - drawing from Quranic inferences, prophetic precedents and caliphal codes. This session traces those evolving ideas, from the formative centuries to revivalist movements of the twentieth century, and the complex currents that continue into the twenty-first. Exploring parallels between West Asia and South Asia, the conversation moves beyond borders to reveal how religious thought and political ambition intertwine. In a world where ideas drive conflicts as much as armies, understanding these enduring currents is essential to reading the past and discerning the forces that shape our world today.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

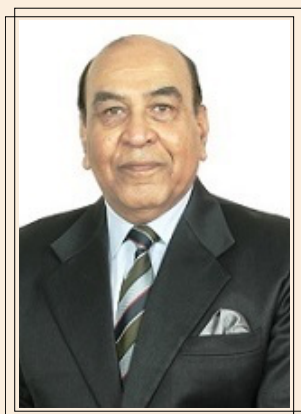


Dr. Adil Rasheed

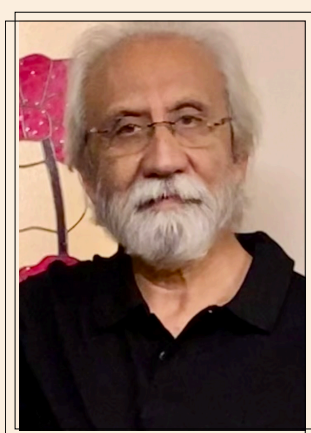
*Political Islam: Parallel
Currents in West Asia and
South Asia,*
Pentagon Press, 2023

Dr. Adil Rasheed is a Research Fellow (Selection Scale) and Coordinator of the Counter Terrorism Centre at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Strategic Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA). Author of *Political Islam: Parallel Currents in West Asia and South Asia* (2024), *Countering the Radical Narrative* (2020), and *ISIS: Race to Armageddon* (2015), he is currently working on *Messianic Geopolitics: Threat to Global Security*. His widely read papers include "Influence Operations: The Sharp Power of Non-Kinetic Subversion" (2024), "Impact of Vedanta on Indian Strategic Culture" (2021), and "Countering the Threat of Radicalisation" (2016). Before joining MP-IDSA in 2016, Dr. Rasheed served as Senior Research Fellow at the United Services Institution of India (USI) and as a Researcher at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (2006–14). Earlier, he worked as Op-Ed Editor at Khaleej Times and Emirates News, interviewing leaders such as Mahathir Mohamed, Leon Panetta, and Muhammad Yunus.

PANELISTS



**Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM**
(Retd)**



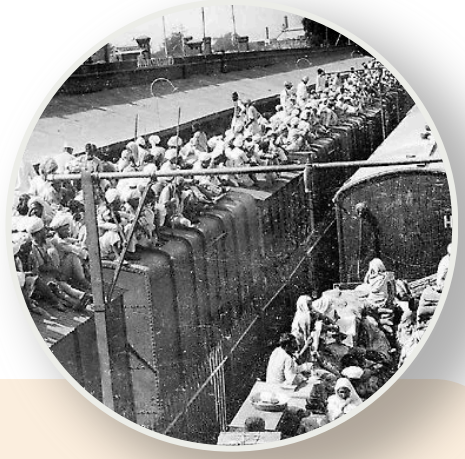
Prof S Irfan Habib

Through his illustrious 40-year career, Lt Gen Hasnain has served in turbulent environments and global hotspots - from Sri Lanka to Siachen, the Northeast to Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), and UN missions in Mozambique and Rwanda. Having served seven tours in J&K, he commanded the Indian Army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps and is among India's foremost analysts on J&K, Pakistan, the Middle East, and transnational extremism. A sought-after speaker and columnist for leading newspapers, he appears regularly on national television. An alumnus of Sherwood College, St. Stephen's College, the Royal College of Defence Studies, King's College London, and the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, he champions the "Scholar Warrior" ethos in the Indian Army. He has spoken at global forums including IISS London and Singapore's leading policy institutes. A Distinguished Fellow at VIF and CENJOWS, and on the Governing Council of ICWA and IPCS, he continues to shape India's strategic thought.

Prof S Irfan Habib has worked extensively on the history of science and political history. After teaching history, he joined the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi, spending over three decades studying the intellectual and institutional foundations of modern science during colonial India. His research began with the dissemination of modern science in Indian languages, especially Urdu, and later explored the interface between indigenous and colonial knowledge systems. He has raised vital questions on the diversity of knowledge and cultural practices in India and beyond. Among his many works are *Situating the History of Science*, *Social History of Science in Colonial India*, *Domesticating Modern Science in Colonial India*, *To Make the Deaf Hear*, *Jihad or Ijtihad*, *Indian Nationalism: The Essential Writings*, and *Inquilab*. A Fulbright Scholar and former Maulana Azad Chair at NUEPA, he has taught at leading universities worldwide, including Cambridge, Humboldt, and MIT.

Session - 6A
14th November, 2025, Friday
1600-1650 Hrs

CONTESTED PARTITIONS



When empires ebb, new nations emerge - born of bold visions, restless movements and contested dreams. The mid-20th century was a moment of momentum, when Asia's map was redrawn not only by leaders in capitals, but by soldiers in jungles, families in villages and voices rising for freedom. In *Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia*, Sam Dalrymple traces five pivotal partitions that reshaped the region across - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal and beyond, revealing how diplomacy, defiance, and determination forged new frontiers. His narrative, drawn from archives and oral histories, captures both the power struggles and the personal journeys behind these transformations. Joining this exploration, Dr. Pallavi Raghavan brings a deeply researched perspective on the complex legacies of partition. Her current work on the global history of Bengal's 1905 Partition examines how administrative practices of division travelled across the British Empire, shaping enduring ideas of borders and belonging. Together, their stories will remind us that partitions are never just boundaries - they are battlegrounds of power, politics and people. This session will also bring alive those turning points, inviting us to reflect on the legacies and lessons of contested partitions.

MODERATOR



Cmde C Uday Bhaskar
(Retd)

Commodore C Uday Bhaskar (Retd), former Director of IDSA, New Delhi retired from the Indian Navy in early 2007, after 37 years service. He was the Director of the National Maritime Foundation from Jul 2009 till Jul 2011. The Commodore was also associated with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) from 1990 where he served as the Deputy Director (1996-2004) and later headed the Institute till late 2005. Subsequently he was appointed Member-Secretary of the Government of India's Task Force on 'Global Strategic Developments' - a report submitted to the Prime Minister of India. Cmde Bhaskar is Editor, Maritime Affairs; and is on the Editorial Board of Contemporary Security Policy. He has edited books on nuclear and international security related issues and has contributed over 60 research articles to journals in India and abroad. He is a guest lecturer at the Indian National Defence College and other military colleges. He is a Life member of the United Service Institute (USI) and is also Chairman, Middle East Institute at New Delhi. The Commodore is on the Governing Council of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), and also on the Advisory Panel of the India Habitat Centre (IHC) in New Delhi. Cmde Bhaskar is also a columnist for Reuters and the Dainik Jagran.

PANELISTS



Mr. Sam Dalrymple

*Shattered Lands: Five Partitions
and the Making of Modern Asia,*
HarperCollins, 2025



Dr. Pallavi Raghavan

Sam Dalrymple is a Delhi-raised Scottish historian, film-maker and multimedia producer. He graduated from Oxford University as a Persian and Sanskrit scholar. In 2018, he co-founded Project Dastaan, a peace-building initiative that reconnects refugees displaced by the 1947 Partition of India. His debut film, *Child of Empire*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2022 and his animated series, *Lost Migrations*, sold out at the British Film Institute the same year. His work has been published in the New York Times, Spectator and featured in Time, The New Yorker and The Economist. He is a columnist for Architectural Digest and, in 2025, Travel & Leisure named him 'Champion of the Travel Narrative'. *Shattered Lands* is his first book.

Pallavi Raghavan is assistant professor of international relations at Ashoka University. She is the author of *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship, 1947 – 1952* (Hurst Publishers, 2020). Pallavi has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, including *The Economic and Political Weekly* and *Modern Asian Studies*, and *International History Review*. She also contributes frequently to news outlets such as *The Wire* and *Scroll.in*. Her current project is focused on a global history of Bengal's 1905 Partition. She is interested in the ways that techniques of administrative partitioning travelled between different contexts of the British Empire, and left an important legacy for understanding the nature of territorial conflict in the contemporary moment. Pallavi holds a PhD in Modern South Asian History from the University of Cambridge.

**TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGY:
ADAPTING WARFARE FOR THE
FUTURE**



In every age of history, the art of war has been shaped by the tools of its time. From the sword and shield to the jet and satellite, nations have survived and thrived by staying ahead of change. Today, as new frontiers of artificial intelligence, cyber power, autonomous systems, and space technologies redefine the battlefield, the question is no longer whether we adapt, but how fast we can. This session explores how India's defence ecosystem built on research, industry and strategic vision, can chart the course of future warfare. It examines the fine balance between invention and intention: how breakthroughs in labs must meet battlefield needs, how strategy must anticipate threats yet remain agile, and indigenous innovation, robust manufacturing, and industrial self-reliance can safeguard sovereignty in an era of unpredictable conflicts and global competition. At its heart, the session is about more than machines - it is about strategy, security and superiority. The future demands not just the creation of cutting-edge technologies, but their alignment with national purpose. The path forward lies in uniting technology, strategy, and self-reliance to adapt faster, smarter, and stronger.

MODERATOR



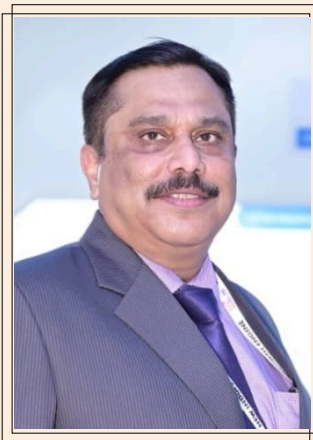
**Maj Gen (Dr.) Pawan
Anand, AVSM, PhD (Retd),
Director, USI-CETANB**

Maj Gen (Dr.) Pawan Anand, AVSM (Retd), was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers, winning the President's Gold Medal at the NDA for being First in Order of Merit and the Sword of Honour at the IMA. In his distinguished career, he commanded an Armoured Engineer Regiment, an Engineer Brigade in a Strike Corps, and served as Chief Engineer of South Western Command. During the Kargil War, he controlled operations as Brigade Major on the LC, later serving as Col Adm in a Counter Insurgency Force. He has been an instructor at IMA and CME, completed all apex military courses including DSSC, HDMC and the NDC, and represented India in international delegations. Twice decorated for distinguished service, he also held key appointments in acquisitions and procurement. A qualified Mechanical Engineer with Masters and Doctorate in Strategic Studies, he now directs the USI's Centre for Atmanirbhar Bharat and Technologies, mentors at NDC, guides PhD scholars in strategic studies, serves as an empanelled arbitrator, advises corporates on strategy, and contributes as a speaker and author.

PANELISTS



**Air Vice Marshal Arun Malik,
VSM (Retd)**



**Col Sanjay Singh (Retd),
Chief General Manager, UPDIC**

Air Vice Marshal Arun Malik, Vishisht Seva Medal, is a distinguished aerospace strategist and experimental test pilot with over 40 years of service in the Indian Air Force. With more than 4,200 flying hours on 25 aircraft types, he has extensive experience in aircraft development, flight testing, and strategic defence planning. A Category 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor and Experimental Test Pilot, he has held key appointments including Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Projects), Director, IAF Project Monitoring Team (ADA), and Project Director (Flight Testing) at the National Flight Test Centre, overseeing programmes such as the LCA Tejas, Saras Mk-II, and Intermediate Jet Trainer. An alumnus of the NDC, Air University (USA), and JNU, he is known for leadership in indigenous aviation projects, multi-agency collaboration with DRDO, HAL, and ADA, and mentoring the next generation of aerospace professionals.

Colonel Sanjay Singh, Chief General Manager of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC), Government of Uttar Pradesh, is a distinguished alumnus of IIT Bombay and the Defence Services Staff College. A seasoned Army veteran with over three decades in the Corps of Engineers, he has held key leadership roles in OP Vijay, OP Parakram, and insurgency operations in the Northeast and J&K. As Chief Engineer, Assam Rifles, he ensured operational preparedness through critical infrastructure development across six Northeastern states. Recipient of the Chief of Army Staff Commendation (2012) for fortification enhancements along the LAC, Col Singh is an expert in military engineering and strategic planning. A thought leader on defence indigenisation, he has driven UPDIC to secure investments exceeding ₹12,000 crore and MoUs worth ₹37,000 crore in three years. An avid reader and writer, he has contributed to print media and authored a book chapter. A sports enthusiast, he has competed in state-level swimming, diving, and badminton tournaments.

PANELISTS



Dr. Mayank Dwivedi,
NDC, OS & Director General
(HR), DRD



Ms. Gunjan Chawla



Shri. Prem Andrade,
Distinguished Engineer

Dr. Mayank Dwivedi, Scientist 'H'/Outstanding Scientist, is the Director General (HR) at DRDO Headquarters. A Gold Medallist in Polymer Technology from DCE Delhi and PhD from IIT Delhi, he earlier served as Director, DMSRDE Kanpur, leading the development of advanced defence materials including Ramjet Fuel, Stealth Materials, and Bulletproof Jackets. An alumnus of the National Defence College, he has also headed DIITM and the Defence Technology Commission Secretariat. With over three decades in polymeric composites and nanotechnology, Dr. Dwivedi has contributed to key programmes such as Agni and BrahMos and is a recipient of the Agni Award (2018) and UNDP Water Sustainability Award (2023).

Ms. Gunjan Chawla is the Legal Adviser to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regional delegation for India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Maldives. Before joining the ICRC, she led a research project on technology and national security law at the Centre for Communication Governance, National Law University Delhi. She has previously served at the International Court of Justice in The Hague and as a Legislative Assistant (PRS LAMP Fellow) to a Member of Parliament in India. An alumna of NLU Delhi, she holds an LL.M. in National Security Law from Georgetown University and a Master's in International Affairs from Sciences Po, Paris.

Prem Andrade is a Distinguished Engineer at Synopsys with over 28 years of experience in engineering simulation and digital transformation. A graduate of IIT Bombay with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Mechanical Engineering, he serves as a global technical advisor, guiding organisations in advancing their digital engineering journey from design to sustainment. His expertise includes model-based systems engineering, simulation-driven design, and advanced analytics. In the Aerospace and Defence sector, he focuses on developing and integrating digital engineering frameworks for autonomous systems, radars, sensors, satellites, and communication networks, driving innovation and operational excellence globally.

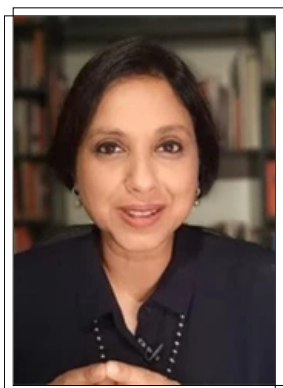
Session - 07 (Special)
14th November, 2025, Friday
1700-1800 Hrs

RIISING INDIA ENGAGES THE WORLD



What happens when a nation that once found itself at the margins of global power begins to sit at the centre of the table? That's India's journey - from a cautious participant to a confident shaper of world affairs; a story of vision, voice, and verve. It is this trajectory that frames our special session, exploring how a rising India balances alliances with autonomy, and extends its influence from New Delhi to New York. Ambassador Rajiv Sikri's *Strategic Conundrums: Reshaping India's Foreign Policy* looks ahead to the choices India must make in a complex century: managing neighbours with maturity, ensuring energy security, strengthening economics, and aligning defence with diplomacy - all through innovative approaches to meet the demands of a fast-changing world. This session will highlight how rising India engages the world with principle and pragmatism - balancing sovereignty with strategy, and transforming its growing stature into enduring influence.

In Conversation With



Suhasini Haidar is the Diplomatic Editor of *The Hindu*, covering Indian diplomacy, international developments and conflicts, and contributing columns regularly. She hosts the weekly online show "World View with Suhasini Haidar". Over the span of her career of nearly 30 years, Suhasini has worked with CNN International (1995-2005), CNN-IBN (2005-2014), until her present role at *The Hindu* newspaper. She has contributed to a number of books on South Asia, diplomacy with the US and Japan as well as the Global South.

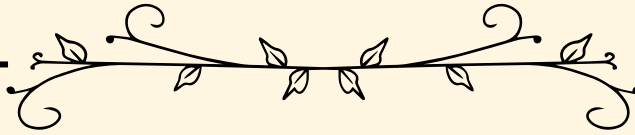
**Ms. Suhasini Haidar,
Senior Journalist &
Diplomatic Editor, The Hindu**



**Amb. Rajiv Sikri,
IFS (Retd)**

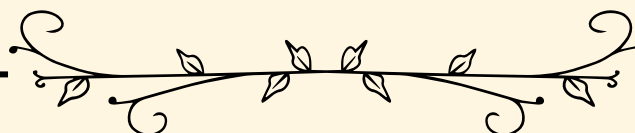
***Strategic Conundrums:
Reshaping India's Foreign
Policy,
Penguin Business, 2024***

Amb. Rajiv Sikri had a distinguished diplomatic career of over 36 years in the Indian Foreign Service from 1970 to 2006. He retired as Secretary in India's Ministry of External Affairs, where he oversaw India's relations with East Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania, West Asia, Iran and the Persian Gulf region, and Central Asia. His other senior assignments in the Ministry of External Affairs have been as Special Secretary for Economic Relations, Additional Secretary for Strategy and Research, Head of the Soviet and East Europe Division, and Head of West Europe Division. He has served as India's Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Deputy Chief of Mission in Paris, Political Counsellor in Moscow, Deputy Consul General and Commercial Consul in New York, and Political First Secretary in Kathmandu. Ambassador Sikri is a well-known strategic analyst and commentator on foreign affairs. He has also contributed several chapters in edited books, as well as articles in scholarly journals.



SESSIONS

DAY - 2



Session - 1A
15th November, 2025, Friday
1000-1050 Hrs

**UDBHAV:
GREAT INDIAN MILITARY LEADERS
AND MILITARY SYSTEMS**



Every nation carries stories of commanders whose courage shaped its course and whose choices changed centuries. India, too, is marked by such men - leaders who braved mountains, marched through monsoons, and mastered the art of both sword and strategy. This session journeys into the lives and legacies of India's remarkable military minds and systems. From the far-reaching campaigns of southern empires, whose ambition redrew alliances in the south, to the fearless campaigns of General Zorawar Singh, who carried the Indian flag across frozen Himalayan frontiers, the discussion revives episodes often remembered in fragments, yet central to our military memory. It also reflects on the systems that sustained these struggles - how armies were raised, battles were fought, and leadership defined. These tales tell more than triumphs - they teach timeless lessons in tenacity, tact and the tradition of military systems. They show that strategy succeeds not in solitude, but in step with the shifting sands of circumstance and terrain. Here, history is not a relic, but a reminder: that India's strength has always sprung from the synergy of vision, valour and vigilance. Join *Udbhav* to discover how leaders shaped systems, systems shaped history and history continues to inspire the Indian Army today.

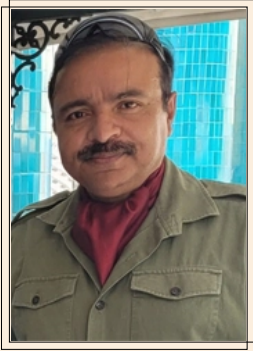
MODERATOR



Lieutenant General Ghanshyam Singh Katoch (Retd) is an infantry officer and alumnus of the DSSC, Higher Command Course, and National Defence College. He holds degrees from JNU, Madras University, the Naval Postgraduate School (USA), and Devi Ahilyabai University. He commanded formations across diverse theatres, including the LoC, Kashmir, LAC, and the Desert Sector, retiring as Director General, Perspective Planning in 2016. Post-retirement, he has served as Founding Director, Centre for Anti-Terrorism Studies (NSG), Distinguished Fellow, USI, and Centre for Land Warfare Studies. A prolific author, he has written three books and numerous articles on strategy and military history.

Lt Gen
Ghanshyam Singh Katoch,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

PANELISTS



Col Ajay Raina, SM (Retd)

***Beyond the Frozen Frontiers:
General Zorawar Singh's
Life & His Forays Into The
Himalayan Highlands,
Sabre & Quill, 2024***



Maj VV Narayanan (Retd)

Col Ajay K Raina, Sena Medal (Retd), was commissioned into the 93 Field Regiment in 1990 and later commanded the same unit (2007-2008). A gallantry awardee for operations in Northern Kashmir (2006), he took premature retirement in 2017. He is the Founder-Trustee of the Military History Research Foundation (India) and has authored or edited 29 books on military history and strategy, several translated into Indian languages. A motivational speaker, prolific columnist, and frequent media panellist, he writes and speaks widely on history, geopolitics, and national security, contributing significantly to India's contemporary strategic discourse.

Major Narayanan is a military officer, scholar, and speaker, who commanded the strategically vital Nathu-la Pass on the Indo-China border, leading high-risk commando operations in extreme conditions. Commissioned from the Officers Training Academy into the 17 Jat Regiment, the famed "Mashkow Warriors" of the Kargil conflict, he holds degrees in Economics and Vaishnavism from Madras University and was titled "Mr. Madras" by Dr. MG Ramachandran. A national Silambam athlete, he represented India at the South Asian Federation Games. A leadership coach and speaker, he serves as President of Hypnotique Circle, India's oldest hypnosis forum, and mentors Toastmasters International chapters.

TAMING THE WAVES



For centuries, India's seas have shaped her story - from the seafaring Cholas and the daring fleets of Shivaji Maharaj to the modern Indian Navy that patrols strategic waters today. The Indian Ocean has long been a stage for commerce, conquest, and courage, linking continents, cultures, and civilizations through tides of trade and currents of conflict. *Taming the Waves* explores this enduring maritime mastery. The session traces the growth of India's maritime consciousness, the significance of well-considered naval policy, and the evolution of maritime doctrine that balances tradition with technology. It also reflects on India's early command of the seas - when coastal fleets skillfully combined land and sea power in a distinctive "brown-water" strategy, shaping the balance of power along the Konkan coast and reminding us that naval innovation is not new, but deeply rooted in India's past. These lessons from history serve as a compass for the future. From protecting trade routes to projecting power, from safeguarding sovereignty to shaping geopolitics, the Indian Navy remains a sentinel of the seas and a pillar of national security. Join this voyage through time and tide to discover how the Navy continues to command the currents of influence across the Indian Ocean and beyond.

MODERATOR



Anirudh Deshpande is Professor of Modern History, Department of History, Delhi University. He has been a Teen Murti Fellow (2001-2005), ICCR Guest Professor at the Vienna University, Austria (2014-15), Visiting Professor at the NBU Siliguri (November 2015) and History Department AMU (2017). He has authored several books covering modern Indian history, military affairs, and social sciences.

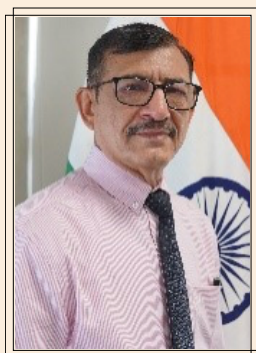
Prof Anirudh Deshpande

*The Rise and fall of a
Brown Water Navy*
Aakar Books, 2021

PANELISTS



**VAdm Pradeep Chauhan,
AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd),
DG National Maritime
Foundation**



**Dr. Vijay Sakhuja
(Editor)**



**Dr. Pragya Pandey
(Editor)**

***K.M. Panikkar and The
Growth of a Maritime
Consciousness in India,
ICWA and Vij Books, 2022***

Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan, AVSM & Bar, VSM (Retd), is the Director-General of the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi. An alumnus of the NDA, DSSC, Naval War College, and National Defence College, he served over four decades in the Indian Navy, commanding four ships including the aircraft carrier INS Viraat. He established and commanded the Mauritius National Coast Guard and conceptualised the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). A former Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command, and Commandant, Indian Naval Academy, he continues to advise government bodies on maritime and strategic affairs and has authored over 95 professional articles.

Dr. Vijay Sakhuja is Professor and Head of the Centre of Excellence for Geopolitics and International Studies at REVA University, Bengaluru, and former Director of the National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi. A former naval officer, he has served at leading institutions including ISEAS (Singapore), CICP (Cambodia), ICWA, IDSA, and USI. A distinguished scholar, he holds M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Dr. Sakhuja has authored or edited over 50 books and monographs on geopolitics, maritime security, Blue Economy, climate change, and maritime history, and is widely regarded as a leading voice on Indo-Pacific affairs.

Dr. Pragya Pandey is a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi, specialising in maritime security, the Indian Ocean, the Indo-Pacific, and regional geopolitics. She earned her Ph.D. from the Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and previously taught Political Science at Miranda House, University of Delhi. She has co-edited volumes including *Roads, Winds, Spices in the Western Indian Ocean*, *KM Panikkar and the Growth of a Maritime Consciousness in India*, and 1982 UNCLOS Perspectives from the Indian Ocean. Dr. Pandey has published widely and participated in numerous national and international dialogues.

MILITARY BIOGRAPHIES



From frozen frontiers to forested foothills, the Indian Army marches with might, mastery and morale. Soldiers scale snowy summits, navigate narrow ridges and face formidable foes with fearless fortitude. Every mission, every maneuver and every moment of decision shapes a saga of skill, sacrifice and steadfast service. Through harsh high-altitude hardships at Siachen, relentless counter-insurgency ops along the LoC and across Kashmir, they turn trials into triumphs and challenges into chapters of courage and resilience. Their strength and strategy safeguard not just borders, but the very spirit of the nation. Across decades, these defenders have demonstrated dedication, discipline and daring, leaving an enduring imprint on India's military legacy. This session brings alive the stories of remarkable individuals: the fearless feats of Naib Subedar Chunni Lal, AC, VrC, SM; the strategic skill and judicious leadership of Lt Gen Rostum K Nanavatty; and the heroic resolve of Maj Gen Janak Singh Katoch. Together, their lives showcase bravery, vision, and the enduring ethos of the Indian Army. Join this session with Lt Gen Satish Dua, Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, and Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch to hear these extraordinary stories, celebrate courage and leadership, and step into the world of India's finest soldiers.

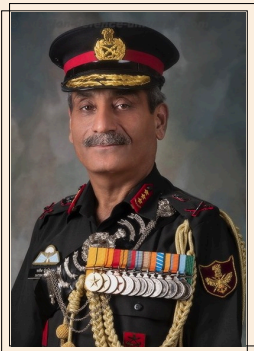
MODERATOR



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh,
VSM (Retd)

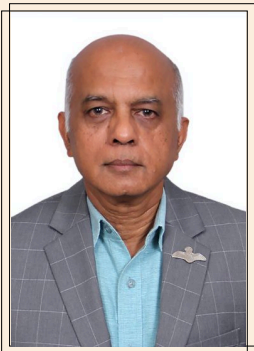
Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) was commissioned into the 18 Cavalry in December 1981, a Regiment he later had the honour of commanding. A second-generation officer, he is an alumnus of The Doon School, Dehradun, and St. Stephen's College, Delhi. Over a distinguished 38-year career, he held numerous command, staff, and instructional appointments across diverse terrains, including commanding an Armoured Brigade in the Desert Sector during its conversion to Arjun tanks and the prestigious First Armoured Division. He served as a UN Military Observer in Iraq and Kuwait, Brigade Major of a Mountain Brigade in counter-insurgency operations in the North East, and held key staff roles at Army Headquarters and the Integrated Defence Staff. An accomplished instructor, he served at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and as Platoon Commander at the Indian Military Academy. Retiring as Director General of Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, he played a vital role in ex-servicemen welfare. A prolific writer and skilled public speaker, he continues to share insights on defence and national security.

PANELISTS



**Lt Gen Satish Dua, PVSM,
UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd)**

*Bravest of the Brave: The Inspiring
Story of Naib Subedar Chunni Lal,
AC, VrC, SM, HarperCollins, 2025;
A General Reminisces: A Life under
Fire in Kashmir, Penguin India, 2025*



**Air Vice Mshl (Dr.) Arjun
Subramaniam, AVSM, PhD
(Retd)**

*Shooting Straight: A Military
Biography of Lt Gen Rostum K
Nanavatty, HarperCollins, 2025*



**Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)**

*A Kashmir Knight and the Last 50
Years of the Princely State of J&K,
Sabre & Quill, 2025*

Lieutenant General Satish Dua, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd), served the Indian Army for over four decades, retiring as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff in 2018. A counter-terrorism specialist from 8 JAK LI (Siachen), he has operated extensively in Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast. As Corps Commander, Srinagar, he planned and executed the 2016 surgical strikes following the Uri terror attack. As CDS, he oversaw the creation of the National War Memorial. He has also served as a Commando Instructor and as India's Defence Attaché to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and remains a respected voice on security affairs.

Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam (Retd) is a former fighter pilot, military historian, and strategic affairs commentator. He serves as Adjunct Faculty at the Kautilya School of Public Policy, Hyderabad, and lectures at war colleges across India's Armed Forces. He is the author of several acclaimed books, including the two-volume *India's Wars* (HarperCollins), a comprehensive account of India's military history, as well as *Shooting Straight* and *Reflections of an Air Warrior* (Revised Edition, 2025). Widely published and respected, he offers deep insights into India's defence policy, strategic thought, and the evolution of its armed forces.

Lieutenant General Ghanshyam Singh Katoch (Retd) is an infantry officer and alumnus of the DSSC, Higher Command Course, and National Defence College. He holds degrees from JNU, Madras University, the Naval Postgraduate School (USA), and Devi Ahilyabai University. He commanded formations across diverse theatres, including the LoC, Kashmir, LAC, and the Desert Sector, retiring as Director General, Perspective Planning in 2016. Post-retirement, he has served as Founding Director, Centre for Anti-Terrorism Studies (NSG), Distinguished Fellow, USI, and Centre for Land Warfare Studies. A prolific author, he has written three books and numerous articles on strategy and military history.

TUSSLES OVER TIBET



High on the “roof of the world”, Tibet has long been a land of lofty peaks and layered politics, where spiritual sanctity meets strategic significance. Cradled between the towering Himalayas and the vast Central Asian steppes, it became a canvas for imperial contests, clandestine manoeuvres, and enduring enigmas. From the cloak-and-dagger clashes of the Great Game involving Britain, Russia and China, to the tense currents of Sino-Indian rivalry, Tibet’s journey tells a tale of intrusion, identity and intrigue. Join Ambassador Dilip Sinha and Dr. Paul McGarr as they will be charting Tibet’s turbulent terrain - from the rise of Tibetan Buddhism to the escape of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and from covert Cold War manoeuvres across South Asia to modern geo-political tensions that continue to shape the region. The session will explore how espionage, sovereignty and strategy converge in a land both sacred and strategic. Through stories of secret struggles, silent stakes and shifting sovereignties, this session brings Tibet’s tensions into focus. Don’t miss this session to travel through history, understand the forces that shaped this high Himalayan land, and reflect on the enduring quest for peace and autonomy.

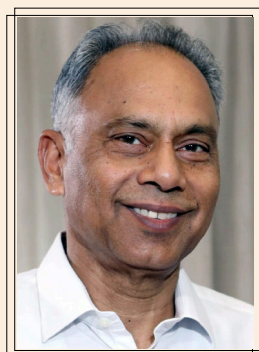
MODERATOR



Maj Gen RS Yadav,
VSM (Retd),
Director, USI-CS3

Major General Rajendra Singh Yadav, VSM (Retd), a President’s Awardee from the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, was commissioned into the Rajputana Rifles Regiment and superannuated on 31 December 2017 after 38 years of distinguished service. A scholar with an exceptional academic record, he received the National Senior Science Talent Search Scholarship from NCERT and topped all civil and military courses up to M.Sc. and M.Phil. He commanded an Infantry Division, served on all active borders with Pakistan and China, and gained extensive counter-terror operations experience in J&K and the North East, earning the Vishisht Seva Medal. He also served as Defence Attaché in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen. Post-retirement, he has been Vice Chancellor of a University, receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award for contributions to higher education. An avid sportsman and adventurer, he is a keen traveller and trekker, has visited 31 countries, and is a prolific writer on strategic affairs, specializing in Net Assessment, Scenario Building, Strategic Gaming, and Geostrategic Analysis.

PANELISTS



**Amb. Dilip Sinha,
IFS (Retd)**

Imperial Games in Tibet,
Pan Macmillan, 2024



Dr. Paul McGarr

*Spying in South Asia:
Britain, The United States
and India's Secret Cold War,*
Cambridge University Press,
2024

Amb. Dilip Sinha is a former Indian diplomat who managed relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Bangladesh, and represented India in multilateral negotiations, including at the United Nations and on Climate Change. Now an independent researcher and writer, he contributes to journals and media on international affairs. He is the author of *Legitimacy of Power: The Permanence of Five in the UN Security Council (ICWA)* and *Imperial Games in Tibet*, which examines British-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, China's role in Tibet, and India's strategic perspectives. A sought-after speaker, he continues to engage widely on foreign policy and global governance.

Dr. Paul McGarr is a Lecturer in Intelligence Studies at King's College London and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Asiatic Society. His research focuses on security and intelligence beyond the Anglosphere, clandestine diplomacy, and covert propaganda. A former British Academy Principal Investigator, he has held fellowships at the Library of Congress, Oxford University, and the John F Kennedy Presidential Library. He is the author of *Spying in South Asia* (2024) and *The Cold War in South Asia* (2013), both published by Cambridge University Press, and a regular commentator in leading international media outlets.

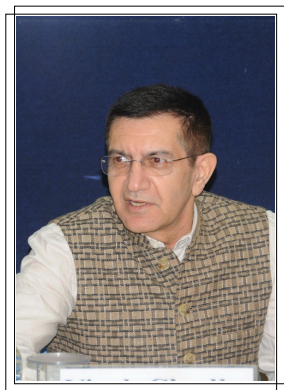
Session - 3A
15th November, 2025, Friday
1200-1250 Hrs

**ASSAM'S MODERN JOURNEY:
HISTORY, CONFLICT, AND THE
PURSUIT OF PEACE**



Amidst the misty mountains, meandering rivers, sprawling tea estates and the mighty rhino's roaming lands of India's Northeast, Assam's saga surfaces as a story of struggle, survival, and strength. From the shadows of World War II to the storms of Independence and Partition, the state navigated political puzzles, cultural currents, and social shifts, while neighboring nations nudged new challenges. New social energies and political forces emerged, shaping aspirations and actions across communities. Environmental and economic pressures intertwined with culture, creating complex layers of change. Assam's journey reflects not only its challenges but also its capacity for adaptation and renewal. Join Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, DG Assam Rifles and Mr. Rajeev Bhattacharyya as they will spotlight Assam's journey from history to the present, from conflict to calm, and from turbulence to tranquility. From insurgent incursions across Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar to the persistent pursuit of political and cultural pride, this session examines how courage and collective commitment crafted a resilient state. Through tales of turmoil, tactical tenacity and tireless triumphs, uncover how Assam adapted, advanced, and arrived at stability. Join this session to explore and experience the spirit guiding Assam towards peace, prosperity and purpose.

MODERATOR



Colonel Vivek Chadha (Retd) is a Senior Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA). He joined MP-IDSA in 2011 after serving for over 22 years in the Indian Army. Colonel Chadha's areas of research include counter-terrorism and military studies. Col Chadha is the Managing Editor of the Journal of Defence Studies. He has edited several books, contributed research papers to journals and writes regularly for national dailies and online platforms.

Col Vivek Chadha
(Retd)

PANELISTS



Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera,
AVSM, SM, DG Assam Rifles



Mr. Rajeev Bhattacharyya
***ULFA: The Mirage of Dawn*,**
HarperCollins, 2023

Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, is the Director General of Assam Rifles (DGAR). Commissioned into 4 SIKH LI in 1990, he later commanded the battalion in Lower Assam. An alumnus of the DSSC Wellington, Higher Defence Management Course, and Royal College of Defence Studies, London, he has held key instructional and staff appointments, including at the NDA, Eastern Command, and Army HQ. He commanded a brigade in Srinagar and served as IGAR (N) at Kohima. A decorated officer with extensive counter-terrorism experience across J&K, Assam, and Nagaland, he holds advanced degrees from Madras University, King's College London, and Osmania University.

Rajeev Bhattacharya is a senior journalist based in Assam, with extensive experience reporting on India's Northeast and its border regions with Myanmar, Bhutan, China, and Bangladesh. A Chevening Fellow, he has worked with The Telegraph, The Indian Express, The Times of India, and Times Now, and was Managing Editor of the Seven Sisters Post. He is the author of *ULFA: The Mirage of Dawn* (2023), *Rendezvous With Rebels* (2014), *Lens & The Guerrilla* (2012), and *Paresh Baruah's Sandhanot* (2013, Assamese). His work offers deep insights into insurgency, geopolitics, and conflict dynamics in India's Northeast.

BSF AND BANGLADESH



In 1971, when brutality blazed across East Pakistan and cries for freedom echoed beyond the border, India answered. Barely five years old, the Border Security Force (BSF) stepped far beyond its mandate, becoming both shield and spear in a struggle that reshaped South Asia. As the Pakistani junta unleashed severe oppression, the BSF became the first ally to a fledgling nation, stepping forward to guide and support its struggle for independence. With bravery and brilliance, its men carried out daring deeds that shaped the course of history - training the *Mukti Bahini*, setting up a clandestine radio station, supporting democratically elected politicians, and enabling defections that weakened Pakistan's hold. They sheltered the displaced, carried vital supplies across dangerous terrain, and launched secret operations that bolstered the fight for freedom. For nine long months, before the final war in December 1971, the BSF became the unseen arm of India's solidarity, working alongside with soldiers, diplomats and citizens. When victory finally came with the birth of Bangladesh, it was also a tribute to the steadfast spirit of this young force that had already proved its mettle. This session brings alive the story of how the BSF, bold yet barely begun, played a pivotal part in shaping South Asia's destiny. Join this session to discover the untold tales, secret struggles and steadfast service of the BSF - the force that stood firm at the frontline of freedom.

MODERATOR



**Ms. Nilova Roy
Chaudhury**

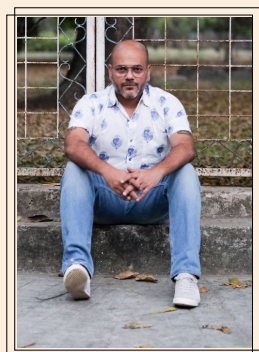
Nilova Roy Chaudhury is a senior journalist, editor, and analyst specializing in Indian foreign policy and strategic affairs. She is Consulting Editor with India News Stream and has held editorial leadership roles at India Review & Analysis, South Asia Monitor, and India Strategic. She founded and edited the Indian Review of Global Affairs (IRGAmag), later integrated into Symbiosis International University's School of International Studies, where she is Visiting Faculty. She has written for publications in India and abroad, contributed as Consulting Editor to India and Global Affairs and Russia India Report, and represented India at the World Journalists Forum in Seoul. Her early career included reporting for *The Washington Post*, *Associated Press*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *The Statesman*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Sakaal Times*. Passionate about education, women's empowerment, cleanliness, and animal rights, Ms. Roy Chaudhury combines decades of experience with a commitment to social causes. She is a widow and mother to her son, Nilashish, a legal reporter with Times Now.

PANELISTS



**Shri. VK Gaur,
Former IG, BSF**

Shri. Virendra Kumar Gaur (former IG, BSF), is a soldier, author, and thinker, with over four decades of distinguished service. A double war veteran of the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars, he later joined the BSF, leading key counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling operations across Rajasthan, Punjab, and the Northeast. Decorated with the Police Medal (1978) and President's Police Medal (1993), he has authored over 50 books on warfare and security. A student of Hindu philosophy, he continues to mentor youth with a message of integrity and national service.



Mr. Ushinor Majumdar

***India's Secret War:
BSF and Nine Months to
the Birth of Bangladesh,***
Penguin, 2023

Ushinor Majumdar is an award-winning investigative journalist and author based in India. He has worked with *Outlook*, *Tehelka*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Confluence Media*, and contributed to *The Caravan*, OCCRP, and BBC projects as a writer and consulting producer. His book *Black Warrant* was adapted into a Netflix series, and his other works are under development for screen. The author of *God of Sin* (2018) and *India's Secret War* (2023), both by Penguin, he also teaches investigative journalism, mentors young reporters, and volunteers with press freedom initiatives, blending storytelling with advocacy for ethical, fearless journalism.

**VALOUR AND HONOUR:
INDIAN ARMY THROUGH
THE AGES**



From the dusty battlefields of the 18th century to the dynamic frontiers of today, the story of the Indian Army is one of courage, continuity and commitment. A force of over a million men and women in uniform, it is among the world's largest armies - not compelled by duty alone, but inspired by dedication. Through centuries, the Army has stood strong - fighting in the World Wars, defending the nation's borders, and scripting defining moments such as the 1971 war that redrew the map of South Asia. It has braved insurgencies within, guarded heights and plains alike, and carried India's tricolour into United Nations peacekeeping missions across the globe. Renowned for its professionalism the Indian Army combines skill with strategy, ensuring readiness at every moment. Ever-evolving with modern technology and training, it continues to adapt to the changing character of warfare. What makes the Army remarkable is not just its strength, but its spirit - the regimental traditions, rich heritage, and unifying ethos that mirrors India's diversity. It is an institution of integrity and indomitable will, evolving with every era, yet anchored in the tenets of discipline, dignity and determination. Join this session to witness the journey of an Army that has guarded our soil, shaped our history, and continues to stand strong as the ultimate symbol of service and sacrifice.

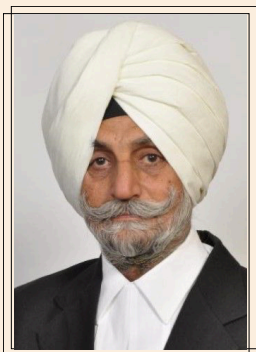
MODERATOR



**Col Singh
(Retd)**

Colonel Singh (Retd) served in Army Air Defence. A graduate of Defence Services Staff College, he commanded his Regiment during operations against Pakistan and later along the Line of Actual Control. He has authored seven books including *History of Indian Air Defence Artillery 1940-1945* and *Forgotten: History of Hong Kong Singapore Royal Artillery*.

PANELISTS



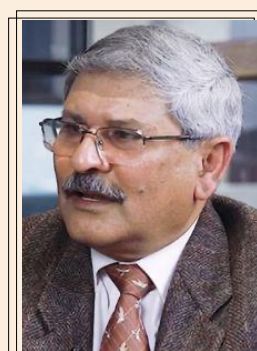
Lt Gen NS Brar,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Lt Gen NS Brar (Retd), an alumnus of RIMC Dehradun and the National Defence Academy, was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in 1969 and is a veteran of the 1971 War. A qualified Army Aviation helicopter pilot and Instructor in Gunnery, he is a graduate of the DSSC, Higher Command Course, and National Defence College. He superannuated as Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff (Perspective Planning and Force Development) and served as Colonel Commandant of the Regiment of Artillery. Post-retirement, he was a Member of the Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh, and is a published author and military analyst.



Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)
Director, USI - CUNS

Major General PK Goswami, VSM (Retd) is an Indian Army veteran and Director, USI Centre for UN Studies. He served as a UN Military Observer in Angola (1991–92) and later as Senior Faculty at the National Defence College, New Delhi. Closely associated with global UN Peacekeeping initiatives, he collaborates with organisations such as NUPI, GCSP, SIPRI, EPON, and the ICRC. He has authored nine monographs on UN peacekeeping and the book *India and UN Peacekeeping: Through the Prism of Time* (2022), released by Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under Secretary-General, UN DPO.



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh,
VSM (Retd)

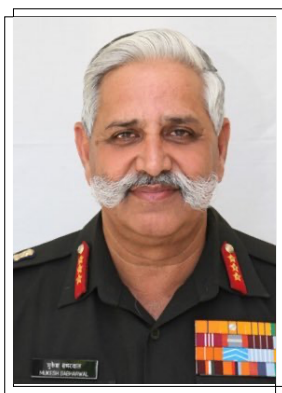
Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) was commissioned into the 18 Cavalry in 1981, a regiment he later commanded. An alumnus of The Doon School and St. Stephen's College, he served 38 years in the Indian Army, holding key command, staff, and instructional appointments. He commanded an Armoured Brigade during its conversion to Arjun tanks and the First Armoured Division, and served as a UN Military Observer in Iraq and Kuwait. A former Director General (Resettlement) at the Ministry of Defence, he is a prolific writer, speaker, and commentator on defence and national security.

LAW, GOVERNANCE, AND THE ARMED FORCES



A nation's strength is not forged only in battles fought with bravery, but also in courtrooms where justice is claimed, in policies where principles are penned, and in governance that guards the guardians. From the quest for equality and fairness, to the promise of pensions and welfare, to the service of veterans in shaping society, the law has always been the quiet yet guiding force shaping the armed forces. This session brings together distinguished voices who have studied and shaped this intersection. Shivani Dasmahapatra, through her recent work *In Her Defence*, illuminates landmark judgments for women in uniform. Maj Navdeep Singh (Retd), with *Military Pensions Simplified*, unravels the complexities of pensions and benefits that uphold the dignity of service and sacrifice. Here, the armed forces emerge not only as defenders of the nation, but as guardians of justice, and torchbearers of progress. Step into this session where the story of service continues - beyond war, into wisdom and justice.

MODERATOR



**Lt Gen (Dr.) Mukesh
Sabharwal, PVSM,
AVSM**, VSM, PhD
(Retd)**

Lt Gen Mukesh Sabharwal's service career has spanned over 40 years in the Indian Army starting with the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971. He was the 15 Corps Commander at Srinagar, in charge of the Kashmir Valley. He also served as the Adjutant General of the Indian Army for three years. He is an alumni of St. Columba's High School, Delhi. He has a Masters in Defence Studies, Masters in Management Studies and Masters in Philosophy. His accomplishments also include a Master of Military Arts and Science from CGSC University, Kansas, USA, and a Masters of Strategic Studies from US Army War College, Pennsylvania, USA. Later he completed his Ph.D. from the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. He is currently a visiting Professor with New Delhi Institute of Management and a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, New Delhi. He enjoys playing golf and is also a passionate poet.

PANELISTS



Ms. Shivani Dasmahapatra

*In Her Defence: Ten Landmark
Judgments on Women in the Armed
Forces,*
Penguin, 2024

Shivani Dasmahapatra is a public policy and communications specialist, advocate, and writer with over three decades of multidisciplinary experience spanning consulting, journalism, and social impact. She has advised Members of Parliament, corporates, and non-profits, and worked with India Today, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and other national publications. As Founder Trustee of *Lest We Forget India Foundation*, she supports Armed Forces families and documents India's military history through stories of courage and sacrifice. A passionate social advocate, she volunteers for initiatives in child education, women's empowerment, and animal welfare, and serves as a patron of the Foundation for Media Professionals.



Maj Navdeep Singh (Retd)

*Military Pensions Simplified:
Commentary, Case Law and
Provisions,*
The Browser, 2023

Major Navdeep Singh (Retd) is an advocate at the Punjab & Haryana High Court and Founder President of the Armed Forces Tribunal Bar Association, Chandigarh. A member of the International Society for Military Law and the Law of War (Brussels), he writes extensively on military, legal, and policy issues and has received eleven commendations from the Army, Air Force, and Tri-Services institutions. His legal work focuses on constitutional law, service matters, and the rights of veterans and disabled soldiers. As part of the Defence Ministry's Committee of Experts, he contributed to landmark reforms reducing litigation and improving military justice and accountability.

RAIGAD : BATTLEFIELD TRAILS OF A WORLD HERITAGE SITE



Rising high in the Sahyadris, *Raigad* is a mountain of memories - where courage was carved in stone and strategy shaped a kingdom. Once the proud capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, its walls whisper stories of bravery, battle and brilliance. Every path, bastion and gateway carries echoes of empire and endurance. Now honoured as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Raigad begins a new chapter through the Raigad Military Heritage Trail - a mission to revive its glory, record its stories and reconnect people with their past. Led by the USI's Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies, the project aims to blend research and restoration, history and heritage, memory and modernity. Beyond preserving forts and fields, it also builds bridge between history and livelihood by training local guides, supporting communities and making heritage a living part of daily life. Join this session to explore how history's stones can still speak - of courage and command, of leadership and legacy; and how the trails of Raigad continue to guide India's quest to preserve, protect and proudly present its martial heritage to the world.

MODERATOR



Mandira Nayar has been a journalist for over two decades. Till recently, she was the Deputy Bureau Chief at *The Week*, where she wrote on culture, foreign policy, and books. She was one of the first few Indian magazine journalists to travel to Myanmar when it opened up to write a cover story. Mandira has traveled extensively within the region reporting from China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Russia. She has worked with *The Hindu* and *The Telegraph*. She co-founded *Agla Varka*, a cultural platform dedicated to fostering meaningful conversations about Punjab, challenging stereotypes, and shaping new narratives.

Ms. Mandira Nayar

PANELISTS



Shri. AK Sinha, Director, ASI (Retd) and Consultant, Raigad Development Authority

AK Sinha is a distinguished archaeologist with 37 years of service in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), retiring as Director, Monuments, in 2013. His expertise spans excavations in India and abroad, earning him a strong professional reputation. During his ASI tenure, he mastered conservation, heritage management, and development of tourist infrastructure at ancient and World Heritage Sites. He currently serves as an Expert Member of the Raigad Development Authority, Government of Maharashtra, advancing heritage conservation and site development.



Mr. AR Ramanathan

AR Ramanathan is a renowned architect and heritage management expert with over 25 years of experience in architecture, conservation, and policy. He has worked with the Ministry of Culture and ASI, contributing to UNESCO dossiers for Bhimbetka, Great Living Chola Temples, and Harappan Sites. As architect for the NGMA in Delhi and Bengaluru, his designs reflect a blend of functionality and cultural expression. Founder-partner of M/s TEAM, he has led major institutional and heritage projects and advised several ministries. A Fellow of RICS and IIA, he teaches at SPA and IIT Delhi, and received the Institution of Engineers (India) Gold Medal.



Ar. Varun Sarjerao Bhamare, Conservation Architect

Varun Bhamare, a Conservation Architect, completed Post-Graduate degree in Architectural Conservation at the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), New Delhi (2011). An active in the field of Heritage Conservation, with experience in the conservation of Jain and Maratha era Temples, Monuments, and Forts. Worked as a Visiting Faculty and Thesis Guide at the Architecture colleges of Pune University and Jalgaon University. Working as the Conservation Architect at the Raigad Development Authority for the past seven years.

SPECIAL ADDRESS



**Shri. Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati,
Chairperson, Raigad Development
Authority**

Shri. Sambhaji Raje Chhatrapati, a distinguished public figure, social reformer, and former Rajya Sabha Member, is widely respected for his work in social justice, cultural preservation, and public welfare. A 13th-generation descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he carries forward a legacy of leadership and service. Nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 2016 by the President of India, he actively raised issues related to education, rural development, youth empowerment and cultural conservation. As Head of the Raigad Development Authority, he leads the restoration of Raigad Fort, promoting heritage conservation and sustainable tourism. Committed to philanthropy in education, healthcare, and skill development, Shri. Sambhaji Raje embodies humility, integrity, and foresight, upholding the timeless Maratha ethos of courage and service.

LESSONS AND INSIGHTS FROM THE 1965 INDO - PAK WAR



Sixty monsoons ago, in 1965, India faced a moment that tested her very soul. The adversary was determined, the challenge immense, and at stake was nothing less than the sovereignty of our nation. In those difficult hours, it was our soldiers who rose tall - not alone, but as the collective spirit of their people. From the salt flats of Kutch, to the hot sands of Rajasthan, and from the plains of Punjab, to the heights of Kashmir, they held their ground in deserts, fields and mountains. With roaring rifles, armoured advances, soaring sorties and vigilant vessels safeguarding our seas, our Army, Navy and Air Force fought with fearless fortitude, securing every frontier and the sky. Every mile mirrored might, every strike sang strength, and the failures of the adversary bore witness to the skill, strategy and steadfastness of our soldiers. As six decades shine since that defining victory, this session reflects on the lessons, leadership and legacy of those critical days. It delves into decisive operations, tactical brilliance, coordinated courage and the strategic decisions that shaped history. Join this session to hear the inspiring stories, gain strategic insights, and experience the enduring spirit of those who stood fearless and firm, turning turmoil into triumph and leaving a heritage that guides India's forces even today.

MODERATOR



Mr. KS Nair

KS Nair has been writing on the Indian armed forces and military affairs in developing countries for over 20 years, publishing around 100 articles, including in American, British, and Japanese outlets. In 2024, he received the Chief of the Air Staff's Commendation from the Indian Air Force. He is the author of three books: *Ganesha's Flyboys* (2012) on the IAF in Congo, *The Forgotten Few* (2019) on the IAF in World War II, and *December in Dacca* (2022) on India's military and diplomatic role in the Bangladesh Liberation War, with two more forthcoming. He has also contributed to several other books on Indian military history. An invited speaker at IAF reunions, international conferences, and podcasts, he has lectured at the Royal Air Force Museum in London. A graduate of IIT Delhi and IIM Bangalore, he has held senior leadership roles - including VP, CEO, and Director - across consulting, investment, and development sectors.

PANELISTS



**Air Mshl VK Bhatia,
PVSM, AVSM, VrC** (Retd)**



**Brig Shamsher Singh, AVSM
(Retd)**



**VAdm (Dr.) AK Chawla,
PVSM, AVSM, NM, VSM,
ADC, PhD (Retd)**

Air Marshal Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, VrC & Bar (Retd) is a highly decorated Indian Air Force veteran, awarded the Veer Chakra twice for valour in the 1965 and 1971 wars. Over a 40-year career, he logged more than 5,500 flying hours on nearly 20 aircraft types, including Mystère, Hunter, MiG-21, Su-7, An-32, Avro, Dornier, and Mi-17. A Qualified Pilot Attack Instructor and Air Force Examiner, he held key command and staff appointments at all levels of the IAF. Recipient of the PVSM and AVSM, Air Marshal Bhatia is celebrated for his courage, leadership, and contributions to Indian military aviation.

Brig Shamsher Singh, AVSM was commissioned into Corps of Signals on 11 Dec 1962. He served as OC 68 Inf Bde Sig Coy during Hajipir Ops in Indo Pak War in 1965. During entire period of ops, he was part of Rover Group of the Bde Cdr. His inclusion in the Rover Group enabled him to be privy to operational scenario prevailing throughout the conduct of Ops. Later years, he was posted as BM of an Inf Bde, Col Adm of a Mtn Div, Instructor in School of Arty, Head Wargame Section ARTRAC. Trained in Germany and Hungary in Automated Integrated Electronic Warfare Systems. Approved for rank of General Officer but superannuated due to age.

Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla (Retd), a Navigation and Direction specialist, was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1982. Over his illustrious career, he commanded five frontline ships, including the aircraft carrier INS Viraat and the Western Fleet, and later served as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command. His key staff roles included Director General Naval Operations, Defence Attaché in Jakarta, and Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy & Plans). An Aide-de-Camp to the President of India, he contributed significantly to naval capability development, DRDO synergy, and strategic maritime cooperation, leaving a lasting impact on India's naval leadership.

RETRACING THE ROOTS OF ASIAN STRATEGIC THOUGHT



Across the ancient landscapes of Asia, strategy has been both science and story, guiding kings, commanders and empires through centuries of change. From the disciplined doctrines of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and the practical principles of the *Sukraniti*, to the epic ethics of the *Mahabharata* and the classical counsel of Chinese strategists, visionary voices have shaped how nations wield power, navigate conflict and sustain sovereignty. These seminal works blend wisdom with warfare, diplomacy with duty, and principles with pragmatism, revealing a tapestry of thought that echoes across generations and geographies. This session journeys through these foundational texts, exploring the moral insights, military acumen, and meticulous management of statecraft that guided rulers across Asia. It uncovers how ancient principles of leadership, alliance, and strategy anticipated modern dilemmas of geopolitics, conflict, and governance, offering enduring lessons for decision-makers and thinkers today. Step into this session to trace the threads of Asian strategic thought, witness how centuries of counsel and conflict converge, and discover the timeless guidance that continues to illuminate the art of power, policy, and diplomacy.

MODERATOR



Dr. Saurabh Mishra

Dr. Saurabh Mishra is a Research Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. Prior to MP-IDSA he was an Associate Professor at the Amity Institute for Defence & Strategic Studies (AIDSS), Noida, preceded by his assignments as Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), an autonomous think-tank of the Ministry of External Affairs, India and Research Assistant at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. He has acquired his Ph.D. from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. His areas of interest can be thematically charted as: Indian Defence and Strategy, Indian Knowledge System, International Institutions, Peace & Conflict, Globalisation, and International Relations Theory. In his previous assignments, he has worked on issues regarding United Nations, Africa and the *Arthashastra*. He has been associated with the indigenous knowledge project at MP-IDSA as well as project *Udbhav* at the United Service Institution of India. His current projects at the MP-IDSA are on Latin America as well as Indian indigenous knowledge, respectively from the perspectives of Defence Economics and Strategy.

PANELISTS



Prof. Rajeev Bhargava

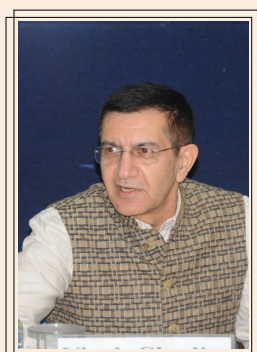
*Bridging Two Worlds: Comparing
Classical Political Thought and
Statecraft in India and China,*
University of California Press, 2023

Renowned political theorist and former director of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi Prof. Rajeev Bhargava is currently an honorary fellow at the Centre and the director of its Parekh Institute of Indian Thought. He has taught at the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi) and has taught and held visiting professorships at several international universities. Prof. Bhargava's work on individualism and secularism is internationally acclaimed, and he has also authored and edited several acclaimed books.



**Maj Gen Vikrant Suresh
Deshpande**

Major General Vikrant S Deshpande is a serving Army Officer who has extensive experience in Counter Infiltration and Counter Terrorism Operations in Jammu & Kashmir and the North East. He has commanded an infantry division on the Northern Borders. The officer has been a research scholar at IDSA and is part of Project *Udbhav* with the United Service Institute. He has completed his PhD thesis on '*Relevance of Indigenous Historical Texts to Contemporary Hybrid Conflicts*' from Amity University.



Col Vivek Chadha (Retd)

*Mahabharata's Strategic Insights:
Navigating the Dharmic Compass,*
Pentagon Press, 2025

Colonel Vivek Chadha (Retd) is a Senior Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA). He joined MP-IDSA in 2011 after serving for over 22 years in the Indian Army. Colonel Chadha's areas of research include counter-terrorism and military studies. Col Chadha is the Managing Editor of the Journal of Defence Studies. He has edited several books, contributed research papers to journals and writes regularly for national dailies and online platforms.

Session - 6B

15th November, 2025, Friday

1600-1650 Hrs

**FICTION AS MEMORY:
ECHOES OF FREEDOM FROM
1857 TO WORLD WAR II**



When history hums, it often whispers through stories. From the crowded courtyards of Old Delhi to the distant jungles of Malaya, fiction becomes the faithful keeper of courage, conflict and conviction. In *A Firestorm in Paradise*, Rana Safvi paints the pulse of Shahjahanabad, tracing the hopes, heartbreaks and heroism of Princess Falak Ara as revolution brews around her. Every street, every palace corridor, every fleeting moment tells of a city on the cusp of change, alive with longing and resilience. Across oceans and decades, Vijay Balan's *The Swaraj Spy* follows Kumar Nair, a soldier turned secret agent, navigating shifting loyalties, perilous paths, and the spirit of a nation striving for independence. From Malabar paddies to Singaporean streets and the Burmese jungles, his journey highlights how individual courage intersects with the larger struggle for freedom. This session will explore how fiction preserves memory, transforms trauma into tale, and keeps the echoes of freedom alive. Step into these stories, traverse time and terrain, and witness how imagination and history intertwine to illuminate India's path to independence.

MODERATOR



Gillian Wright is a translator and writer based in New Delhi. She has translated two classic novels of Hindi literature, *Raag Darbari* by Shrilal Shukla and *A Village Divided* by Rahi Masoom Reza, as well as a selection of the acclaimed short stories of Bhisham Sahni. Her other books include *Presidential Retreats of India* and *The Darjeeling Tea Book*. She has also worked with her partner Mark Tully on all of his books, co-authoring *India in Slow Motion*.

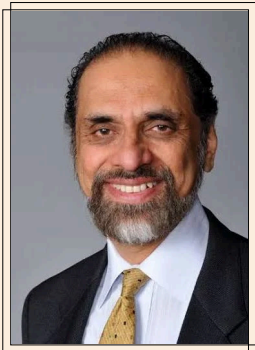
Ms. Gillian Wright

PANELISTS



Ms. Rana Safvi

*A Firestorm in Paradise:
A Novel on the 1857 Uprising,*
Penguin, 2024



Mr. Vijay Balan

The Swaraj Spy,
HarperCollins, 2022

Rana Safvi is a historian, writer, translator, and cultural commentator known for her work on India's heritage, especially the syncretic Ganga Jamuni Tehzeeb. She holds a master's degree in medieval history from Aligarh Muslim University and has authored several acclaimed books, including the Delhi Trilogy and translations of Urdu classics like Asar-us-Sanadid and Dastan-e-Ghadar. Her writings blend storytelling with deep historical insight. Her latest book is a historical novel set in 1857 Delhi, *A Firestorm in Paradise: A Novel on the 1857 Uprising*

Vijay Balan turned to his passion for story-telling and history after a career in rocket-science and marketing. His evocative book, *The Swaraj Spy*, based on six years of research and travel, tells the true story of the secret espionage wing of the Indian National Army (INA) in World War II.

SPECIAL SESSION



When danger dawns and decisions define destiny, every choice charts the course of a nation. This special session will take you from the rugged ridges of the Line of Control to the intricate corridors of UN missions, exploring how leadership, judgment, and strategy intertwine to guide outcomes. Operations will be illuminated through tales of teamwork, tactical thinking, and timely action, showing how planning pairs with prudence and coordination combines with clarity. The discussion will delve into jointness, integration, and theaterisation, showing how these guiding principles and dynamic doctrines build a balanced, brave, and battle-ready force. Tales of tenacity, thoughtful tactics, and transformative thinking will reveal how foresight fuels strength, and disciplined action drives defence. Step into a saga of strategy, where courage confronts challenge, insight inspires innovation, and leadership lights the path forward. Join this session to hear from one of the Indian Army's most respected former Chiefs, sharing experiences that enlighten, engage, and elevate understanding of military mastery.

In Conversation With



**Air Mshl (Dr.) Rajeev
Sachdeva, AVSM, PhD
(Retd)**

Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva AVSM, PhD (Retd) had a distinguished career in the Indian Air Force (IAF), culminating in his role as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff and Additional Secretary (Air) at the Defence Ministry under the first Chief of Defence Staff. Air Marshal Sachdeva is an alumnus of prestigious institutions such as FIS, CDM, and NDC. A Cat 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor, he has logged over 7,200 hours on various transport and trainer aircraft. He is a Certified 'A' Project Manager and holds a Doctorate in Business Management. Air Marshal Sachdeva also holds important positions in various prestigious institutions across the country. He is a Distinguished Fellow at USI and CAPS. His previous leadership roles included commanding An-32 Squadron, CI at Fixed Wing Training Faculty, Centre Director (Aviation) NTRO and SASO, HQ SAC. He has co-authored DAP-2020 and established key verticals like the Defence Space Agency, Defence Cyber Agency and Special Operations Division as DCIDS (Ops) in 2018. A recipient of the Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2016, he has also contributed to numerous academic publications and lectures across military and civil institutions.



**Gen NC Vij,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM
(Retd)**

***Alone in the Ring:
Decision-making in Critical
Times,
Bloomsbury India, 2025***

Gen Vij was the 21st Chief of the Army Staff from Dec 2002 - Feb 2005. He was the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) during the very successful operations by Indian Army for eviction of Pakistani Intruders in Kargil in 1999. He was Vice Chief of the Army during OP Parakram. His tenure as the Chief is remembered for many notable improvements in operational & administrative postures of the Army. The most notable amongst them being the laying of 740 Km long fence along the Line of Control within one year, which brought the infiltration down to insignificant numbers. After his superannuation from the Army, he was appointed Founder Vice Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority, in the rank of Cabinet Minister, for five years from Sep 2005 - 2010. He was a member of the VIF for almost 7 years and then took over as Director, after Mr Ajit Doval became the NSA. He is the author of the books *The Kashmir Conundrum - The Quest for Peace in a Troubled Land* and *Alone in the Ring - Decision Making in Critical Times*.

Session - 08
15th November, 2025, Friday
1730-1800 Hrs

SPECIAL SESSION



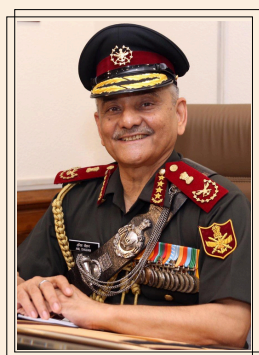
As the character of conflict changes and challenges multiply, the Indian Armed Forces are charting a course of careful change and calculated courage. The final session of IMHF 2025 will journey through the evolving landscape of strategy, synergy and self-reliance, exploring how jointness, integration and innovative thinking are shaping a force that is ready, relevant, and resurgent. From operational orchestration to the creation of integrated theatre commands, the discussion will illuminate how foresight fuels force, indigenous capability cultivates confidence and civil-military collaboration strengthens the shield of sovereignty. Stories of strategy, smart solutions, and sustained reforms will reveal how the Armed Forces are adapting to secure the nation's frontiers while fostering a spirit of progress and purpose. The session will also highlight the pursuit of Atmanirbharta in defence manufacturing and the holistic approach that binds doctrine, discipline and determination. Join this special session to hear from the country's Chief of Defence Staff, one of India's most distinguished military leaders, as he will share insights that unite vision, valour and vigilance in the nation's march towards a "*Sashakt, Surakshit, Samridh and Viksit Bharat*" by 2047.

In Conversation With



**Air Mshl (Dr.) Rajeev
Sachdeva, AVSM, PhD
(Retd)**

Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva AVSM, PhD (Retd) had a distinguished career in the Indian Air Force (IAF), culminating in his role as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff and Additional Secretary (Air) at the Defence Ministry under the first Chief of Defence Staff. Air Marshal Sachdeva is an alumnus of prestigious institutions such as FIS, CDM, and NDC. A Cat 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor, he has logged over 7,200 hours on various transport and trainer aircraft. He is a Certified 'A' Project Manager and holds a Doctorate in Business Management. Air Marshal Sachdeva also holds important positions in various prestigious institutions across the country. He is a Distinguished Fellow at USI and CAPS. His previous leadership roles included commanding An-32 Squadron, CI at Fixed Wing Training Faculty, Centre Director (Aviation) NTRO and SASO, HQ SAC. He has co-authored DAP-2020 and established key verticals like the Defence Space Agency, Defence Cyber Agency and Special Operations Division as DCIDS (Ops) in 2018. A recipient of the Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2016, he has also contributed to numerous academic publications and lectures across military and civil institutions.



**Gen Anil Chauhan,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM,
VSM, ADC
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**

***Ready, Relevant and Resurgent:
A Blueprint for the
Transformation of India's
Military,***

Pentagon Press, 2025

General Anil Chauhan is the current Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces, serving since September 30, 2022. A four-star general with nearly 40 years of service, he has extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu & Kashmir and North-East India. Born on May 18, 1961, he was commissioned into the 11 Gorkha Rifles in 1981. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy, he commanded an Infantry Division in Baramulla, a corps in the North East, and the Eastern Command from September 2019 until his retirement in May 2021. He has also served as Director General of Military Operations and participated in a UN mission to Angola. General Chauhan's distinguished service has earned him the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal, and Vishisht Seva Medal.

ORGANISING TEAM



**MAJ GEN BK SHARMA,
AVSM, SM** (RETD)
DG USI**

Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd) is an Infantry Veteran with vast operational experience and expertise in strategic affairs and multi-domain warfare. He is the Director General of the United Service Institution of India (USI). Decorated with three Presidential awards for distinguished service and courage, he also received a national award for nation-building in 2017. An alumnus of DSSC, Higher Command, and NDC, he has trained in peacekeeping in Chile, served as a UN Military Observer in Central America, and as India's Defence Attaché in Central Asia. His specialisations include Strategic Net Assessment, Scenario Building, Gaming and Red Teaming. He has represented India at leading international forums, including the UN, SCO, BRICS, OSCE, and Valdai, and has authored books, research papers, and contributed extensively to Track-1.5 dialogues.

Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva AVSM, PhD (Retd) had a distinguished career in the Indian Air Force (IAF), culminating in his role as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff and Additional Secretary (Air) at the Defence Ministry under the first Chief of Defence Staff. Air Marshal Sachdeva is an alumnus of prestigious institutions such as FIS, CDM, and NDC. A Cat 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor, he has logged over 7,200 hours on various transport and trainer aircraft. He is a Certified 'A' Project Manager and holds a Doctorate in Business Management. Air Marshal Sachdeva also holds important positions in various prestigious institutions across the country. He is a Distinguished Fellow at USI and CAPS. His previous leadership roles included commanding An-32 Squadron, CI at Fixed Wing Training Faculty, Centre Director (Aviation) NTRO and SASO, HQ SAC. He has co-authored DAP-2020 and established key verticals like the Defence Space Agency, Defence Cyber Agency and Special Operations Division as DCIDS (Ops) in 2018. A recipient of the Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2016, he has also contributed to numerous academic publications and lectures across military and civil institutions.



**AIR MSHL (DR.)
RAJEEV SACHDEVA,
AVSM, PHD (RETD)
USI Council Member**



**SQN LDR RANA TS
CHHINA, MBE (Retd)
Director, USI - CMHCS**

Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina served in the Indian Air Force as a helicopter pilot. He is currently Director of the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS). The author of a number of books, he was Vice President of the Indian Military Historical Society (2004-2020), and a member of the Government of India's Archival Advisory Board. He is a member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Independent Advisory Panel and is actively engaged in promoting the preservation of India's rich tangible and intangible military heritage. A recipient of the MacGregor Medal for best military reconnaissance, he was appointed as an Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire in 2016 and an Officer of the Belgian Order of Leopold in 2018.

ORGANISING TEAM



Dr. ARCHNA TYAGI
Project Coordinator &
Senior Research Fellow,
USI - CMHCS

Dr. Archana Tyagi is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS). With over two decades of experience, she is leading key initiatives such as the annual Indian Military Heritage Festival and Project *Udbhav*, which revives ancient Indian knowledge for modern defence and strategic studies. She is also driving efforts to establish a National Policy for Military Heritage Tourism. For her exemplary work in conceptualising and executing Project *Udbhav*, she was awarded the Chief of Army Staff's Commendation in 2025. Previously, she has worked with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), CARA, National Bal Bhawan, and leading NGOs. Dr. Tyagi is a lifetime member of INTACH Delhi and serves on advisory and school boards, contributing actively to heritage and education.

Cdr Bhavna Salaria (Retd) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS), USI. She is an alumna of INS, Mandovi (erstwhile Indian Naval Academy). With a 14-year tenure in the Indian Navy's Logistics Cadre, she brings a wealth of experience from her varied appointments. Post retirement, she has worked with both Public Sector Undertakings and start-ups. A high achiever, she is a gold medallist in her Bachelor's degree and holds an MBA. Pursuing her passion for dance, she is currently studying Kathak at Prayagraj University.



CDR BHAVNA SALARIA
(Retd)
Senior Research Fellow,
USI - CMHCS



Dr. ANUBHAV ROY
Senior Research Fellow,
USI - CMHCS

Dr. Anubhav Roy is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS), United Service Institution of India (USI), New Delhi. Previously, before joining the USI-CMHCS as a Research Fellow, he was an Assistant Professor of International Studies at Amity University, Noida. He obtained his PhD at the University of Delhi, and has worked on multiple research projects focusing on India's foreign affairs and contemporary global history. Several articles authored or co-authored by him have been published in leading academic journals.

ORGANISING TEAM

Neelotpal Mishra, Senior Research Fellow, is an alumnus of The Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, UK and University of Oxford, UK. He has over 25 years of work experience in industry verticals like government, information and communication, technology, hospitality, airlines, logistics, manufacturing, software product development and financial services. His expertise is information, cyberwarfare and technologies. He has a deep interest in military history and strategic affairs and has done consultancy work for various government organisations. He writes regularly on many Historical and strategic affairs topics.



Mr. NEELOTPAL MISHRA
Senior Research Fellow,
USI



Mr. ADITYA BHALLA
Research Assistant,
USI - CMHCS

Aditya Bhalla is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies, United Service Institution (USI) of India. A History and International Relations graduate from Ashoka University, with a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies and Research, he brings experience across research, policy, digital engagement, and project management. At USI, he contributes to research while also shaping strategy, outreach, and flagship initiatives such as the Indian Military Heritage Festival. His interests lie in South Asia's international history and Indian foreign policy, while his professional versatility reflects a broader ability to adapt across academic, strategic and organisational domains.



Mr. RAKESH K AGNIHOTRI
Project Assistant



Ms. BHARTI NEGI
Project Assistant

ORGANISING TEAM



Mr. SANKALP TYAGI
Research Intern



Ms. AS SHALINI
Project Intern



Ms. ISHIKA MEHRA
Research Intern

PROJECT PARTNERS



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



অসম চৰকাৰ



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM



उत्तराखण्ड राज्य



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