

## From the Desk of Director General

**A**s this year closes, I bring to an end my formal association with the United Service Institution of India (USI), after nearly fourteen years of service—seven as Director (Research) and six as Director General. It has been a long and instructive journey, one that allowed me to work closely with colleagues across generations, disciplines, and the Services. I leave with a sense of gratitude for the cooperation I received and for the opportunity to serve an Institution whose relevance has always rested on continuity, professionalism, and restraint.

As I demit office, it is my privilege to welcome Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, NM, PhD (Retd) as the incoming Director General of the USI. I request all members and stakeholders to extend to him the same trust and cooperation that have sustained this Institution over the decades. Leadership at the USI is less about personal imprint and more about stewardship, and I am confident that this tradition will continue under his dynamic leadership.

The year 2025 was one of consolidation rather than expansion. Financial sustainability remained a central concern. After sustained engagement spanning nearly a decade, the USI was included in the process for fund allocation from the Ministry of Defence. In parallel, voluntary contributions from members, enhanced membership engagement, rentals, sponsored studies, and commissioned projects collectively contributed to partial financial stabilisation, achieved without compromising the Institution's independence or academic integrity. The USI maintains momentum across its core responsibilities—research, professional military education, military heritage, strategic studies, United Nations (UN) studies, emerging technologies, publications and digital outreach. Throughout the year, the Institution continued to provide a professional space for dialogue among military leaders, policymakers, diplomats, scholars, and practitioners, anchored in objective analysis and skill enhancement.

Internally, the year was used to strengthen systems that often remain unnoticed but are essential for institutional health. Considerable attention was also devoted to preserving institutional memory. Foundational registration records were retrieved and consolidated from Chandigarh and London, restoring archival

continuity and strengthening the historical documentation of the Institution's origins and legal standing. The seminar halls and auditorium were upgraded with improved audio-visual and information technology facilities. Additional research spaces, portacabins, and storage facilities were created, and long-pending campus repairs were addressed. Cybersecurity measures were strengthened, and a digital finance management platform was introduced to improve transparency and administrative discipline. The membership process too has been digitised. A new, more dynamic and mobile-friendly website has been created, and all social media handles have been made fully functional.

Attention was also given to governance. Council elections for the 2026-28 tenure were conducted through a hybrid voting system – resulting in greater member participation. The selection of the new Director General was carried out strictly in accordance with the Institution's bye-laws, ensuring a thorough selection. The Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy was implemented, and an Internal Complaints Committee was constituted, reinforcing standards of conduct fundamental to any professional organisation. Another significant endeavour has been to secure corporate social responsibility projects to promote cybersecurity awareness and investment literacy within the armed forces and student community.

The USI's programme calendar during the year reflected continuity in purpose. The Memorial lectures, the MacGregor Memorial Medal ceremony, essay competitions, joint publications with military training institutions, the Combined Operational Review and Evaluation (CORE) Programme, and the Annual UN Forum were conducted as scheduled. Seminars and workshops addressed contemporary security issues, while scenario-based exercises and strategic simulations were organised for the Services, government departments, and foreign service officers. The Institution has acquired niche projects on digitisation of military history records, *Atmanirbhar* (Self-reliant) projects, global consultancy scan and strategic studies. USI's global footprints expanded in terms of exchange of delegations and signing of Memoranda of Understanding.

Commemorative activities included the Diamond Jubilee of the 1965 Indo-Pak War, the Third Indian Military Heritage Festival and military art exhibitions. These engagements sought to connect

military history with current strategic thinking and wider public understanding. The USI also remained engaged internationally through participation in conferences and Track 1.5 dialogues, offering Indian perspectives in diverse settings.

During the year, the USI was visited by senior political, military, and diplomatic leadership, including the Hon'ble *Raksha Mantri*, Hon'ble *Raksha Rajya Mantri*, State Governors, a Chief Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, Service Chiefs, senior civil servants, and diplomats. Their engagement reflected institutional continuity rather than occasion-driven interaction.

The USI's Centres continued to function as the backbone of the Institution. Publications, military history, strategic studies and simulation, professional military education, and emerging technologies were pursued in parallel, each contributing within its mandate. While the scale of activity varied, the emphasis remained on relevance, quality, and institutional credibility.

The wider strategic environment in 2025 remained unsettled, shaped by ongoing conflicts, technological competition, and economic pressures. At the same time, India continued to advance its efforts towards self-reliance and capability development. In such an environment, institutions like USI matter not for immediacy, but for continuity—providing space for reflection, informed debate, and professional education over time. To this end, informed debates via the series titled the Global Heatmap and Strategic Dialogues were carried out on the USI's YouTube channel.

On a personal note, I thank the members of the USI for their association and support, including contributions to the Institution's financial corpus, which remain essential for its functioning. I also encourage readers to engage with the USI's publications, website, and digital initiatives, which seek to make serious strategic discussion accessible to a wider audience.

As I step away from this office, I do so with confidence in the Institution's foundations and in those who will carry its work forward. I am grateful for the trust placed in me over the years and for the opportunity to serve.

With warm regards,

**Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd)**  
Director General