

# *Alumni Connect*

**NDC Alumni Newsletter : November 2021**

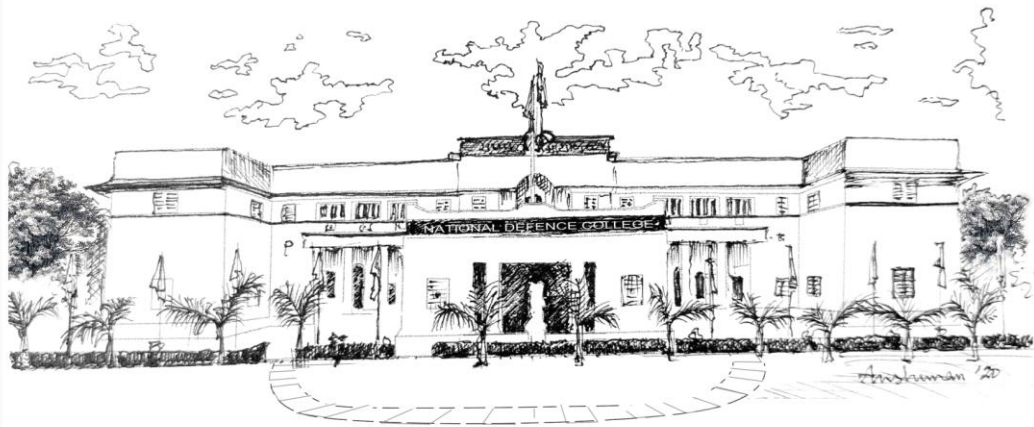


**National Defence College Building : Front View**

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# Message from Defence Secretary

My felicitations to the National Defence College on the occasion of launch of Alumni webpage and Alumni Newsletter.

Since the establishment of National Defence College, an endeavour has been made to make its facilities available to members from friendly foreign countries. Till now 835 members from 69 foreign countries have been trained at National Defence College. Digital media today provides an excellent platform for these alumni to stay connected with each other and their Alma Mater.



I am pleased to know that through the College web page a platform is being created for the alumni to stay connected and maintain their bonds of friendship and mutual learning / exchange of ideas.

It also gives me great pleasure in launching the inaugural issue of Alumni Newsletter.

Once again, my best wishes to the College for starting the alumni outreach.

New Delhi  
11 Nov 2021

Dr Ajay Kumar  
Defence Secretary

# Message from Commandant

My warm felicitations to the faculty, staff, members of the 61<sup>st</sup> Course and all Alumni of the National Defence College, on the unveiling of the inaugural issue of the NDC Newsletter. Raised on the pattern of Imperial Defence College of the United Kingdom, the NDC is among the premier international institutions, and is a think tank and research institute of global affairs and strategic vision. A coveted National resource, which trains selected Indian Defence, Civil service officers and Defence officers of various friendly countries drawn from all the continents in global dynamics and international co-operation.

As we launch the inaugural issue of alumni newsletter, it is my privilege to introduce this slice of NDC history, to commemorate the event. The Newsletter endeavours to encapsulate the events and happenings which have taken place at the College in order to keep abreast with the developments and evolutions since commencement of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. I hope it takes everyone back to the captivating aroma of the freshly brewed coffee in the Hunt Lounge!

The year 2020 can also be nomenclature as Covid-19 year. The unpredictable and unanticipated Corona pandemic continued to ravage our lives mercilessly, resulting in tragic loss of innumerable precious human lives. To face and fight the unknown enemy, one has to swiftly adapt the challenges and prepare a near war like strategy. Thus the whole world devised the new norms of prolonged lockdowns, social distancing and sanitisation. With strategic resilience and adaptability, the College also continued with the aim of imparting Knowledge



beyond Excellence. The events associated with the pandemic, and the geo-political dynamics that erupted in tandem, have presented a golden opportunity for the members, who not only witnessed it, but were able to study, analyse, and learn, from the events in practically real time.

The commitment of the NDC to make the Diamond Jubilee year special, has led to many innovative improvements in the course content and curriculum, to make it much more academically robust and contemporary. The most significant change has been the determined efforts to increase the course strength from the current 100 to 110 members in 2021, and to a final tally of 120 in the years to follow. This necessitated resolute efforts to enhance the capacity, while retaining the heritage premises, with extensive renovations and modifications in the College infrastructure. All this has been undertaken while the Courses were in progress, without letting it affect the curriculum and the tempo. Plan for the new Raksha Bhavan complex, at its future location at Kasturba Gandhi Marg, with a brand-new state of the art and resplendent multi-storeyed building, which will accommodate ninety members under one roof, was prepared and approved.

Over the last six decades, this College has become the Institution it has, due the vision of its founding fathers and the cumulative contributions of previous Commandants, faculty and staff. The credit for its reputation of excellence must go to the alumni, the College has been privileged to produce. The vast pool of professional excellence, knowledge and strategic abilities which reside amongst the alumni, have over the years contributed immensely to their individual Services, Organisations, Governments and Nations. They have truly done this College proud.

In order to have continued affinity and with a focus on keeping pace with the ever-varying global scenario, I hope with earnest sincerity that the Newsletter meets its purpose of stitching the timelines and memories of the associations developed at NDC. I wish one and all a safe and healthier times ahead.

New Delhi  
11 Nov 2021

Air Mshl D Choudhury  
AVSM, VM, VSM  
Commandant, NDC

# Nostalgia (A Day at NDC)

## Forenoon Session

In the mornings, the Course members grouped in what is called as Integrated Analysis Group (IAG) in their respective rooms to discuss/take stock of the progress of analysis work that is assigned to the IAGs. The IAG Chairpersons and Coordinating Chairpersons also carry out co-ordination of various activities scheduled for the day.





## **Lecture/Panel Discussion/Opportunity Talk**

The College has an exhaustive list of visiting Faculty of Domain experts and eminent persons from all spheres related to National and International Security issues. Lectures/Presentations/Panel discussions by the visiting Faculty, form the most important part of training at the College.

Lectures. Lectures by the visiting Faculties are organised on topics related to National Security and Strategic Studies and are focused on issues identified for discussions during the ongoing study. The lectures are of one-hour duration followed by a detailed Question & Answer session, with a short tea/coffee break in between. The Course Members also have free interaction with the visitor at the working lunch and coffee break.

Panel Discussions. On issues involving many viewpoints, the College invites Faculty for a panel discussion by two/three experts. One of the panellist's moderates the discussion followed by Question & Answer session.

Opportunity Talks. Opportunity talks by visiting dignitaries/ distinguished personalities from within the country or from abroad are often organised at the College to expose the Course Members to their views. Visiting heads of States, senior military officials and ministers from foreign countries usually come in this category of talks. Question & Answer session and free interaction are also encouraged during opportunity tasks.

## **Lunch**

The Course Members, Faculty and Staff along with the guest speaker all proceed for lunch in the College Mess.



## **Afternoon Session**

In case of a talk scheduled in the Post lunch session, the talk commences at 1430h followed by the Question & Answer session. If no talks are scheduled in the afternoon session, the Course Members after lunch have time to visit the library or Adm office.



Individual Work. In addition to work undertaken, as part of IAGs, each Course Member is required to carry out the following individual work:-

- (a) Thesis Writing. Each Course Member is required to write a thesis, of length not exceeding 10,000 words, on any topic related to National Security. The topics suggested by the College are based on the inputs received from various government departments/ministries and service HQs to whom the relevant thesis are forwarded at the end of the Course.
- (b) Country Presentation. (only for foreign Course Members). The focus of the presentation is on history, geography, governance set up, industry, economy, defence and relations with India.

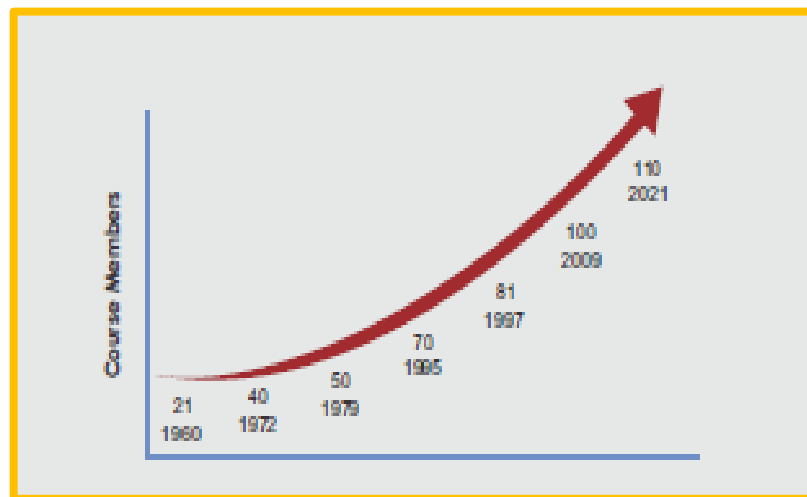
On some of the days, IAGs have their meetings that are either open discussions or with a guest speaker/subject matter expert invited for interaction. Alternatively, the IAGs may visit the Ministry or department concerned or any of the local think tanks for interaction.

***A day at NDC is so planned to ensure maximum utilization of the time and resources available in regard to achieving academic excellence and take care of administrative requirements and social commitments, to enrich the overall experience of the course members at NDC***

## NDC Course Strength

The course members are Brigadier and equivalent officers from the Armed Forces and usually Joint Secretary level officers from the Indian Civil Services. They are complimented by Officers from friendly foreign countries. The course members are all highly qualified and diverse in terms of culture, background, nationality, work and life experiences, skills and interests- an essential underpinning of the programme that lays stress on appreciating the diverse skill sets of the participants. The number of Army, Air Force and Navy officers has increased manifold over the years and the number of Civilian officers too have gradually increased. The course strength of 21 students in 1960, increased to 40 in 1972, 50 in 1976 and further increased to 70 by the 35<sup>th</sup> Course and 84 by the year 1984. By August 2008, the course strength had progressively increased to 100.

The most significant change has been the determined efforts to increase the course strength from 100 to 110 members in 2021, and to a final tally of 120 in the years to follow. The college has been steadily increasing the strength to cater for growing strength of its Armed Forces and Civil Services. As reputation of NDC as a niche institute of strategic learning grew, so did the request from friendly foreign countries. So far, 64 countries have been represented in National Defence College.



# Diamond Jubilee Celebration

## 1960-2020

The Diamond Jubilee is a landmark event in the history of any institution and even more so for an institution of the stature of the National Defence College. The celebrations were initially planned to commence on the raising day of the College, the 27 April 2020. However, the circumstances arisen due the pandemic acted as a spoilsport. Due to the precarious circumstances that folded in the shape of lockdowns, the innumerable events planned to commemorate the celebrations had to be curtailed immensely.

To kick start the Webinar, the keynote address was delivered by Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri. Rajnath Singh, the Defence Minister of India. The Raksha Mantri then gave a rousing speech in which he spoke of the critical role that NDC has played and must continue to play in upholding the Strategic Culture of India.



In spite of several constraints posed in the pandemic year, as a mark of celebrating the diamond jubilee, a Webinar was conducted from 05 - 06 Nov 2021. In a first, the CDS released a book, **“Full Spectrum”** authored by AVM (Dr) Arjun Subramaniam (Retd), followed by an invigorating panel discussion of practitioners and professionals.

The Webinar addressed the issues at the strategic level and looked the perspective changes that the nations may need to focus on strategic affairs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To emphasise more on the vision behind conducting the Webinar, debates were organised on the **“Geopolitics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**, **“India in Transformation”** and **“India’s Security Horizon – the coming Decade”**. Besides the Chief of Defence Staff, the Chiefs of the Naval and the Air Staff, the Webinar was notably attended by The Defence Secretary, The Foreign Secretary, and a large number of serving and retired officers of the Armed Forces and Civilian dignitaries.



Befittingly, it is agreed upon by all that the Diamond Jubilee year was indeed a special one, not only in significance, but also in execution. In addition, the abode of strategic excellence became a trailblazer for online conduct of classes which was emulated by other professional Military Educational institutions in India soon after.

# Presidents' Chair of Excellence

The NDC today is a college of significant international reputation and standing for grooming future strategic leaders. It also functions as an important instrument of the state towards fostering and enhancing strong relationships with friendly countries not only in our neighbourhood but globally as well. The College despite being the apex institution of strategic education in the country did not have an academic chair of excellence. To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee year, the institution of a President's Chair of Excellence was deemed necessary, desirable and appropriate.

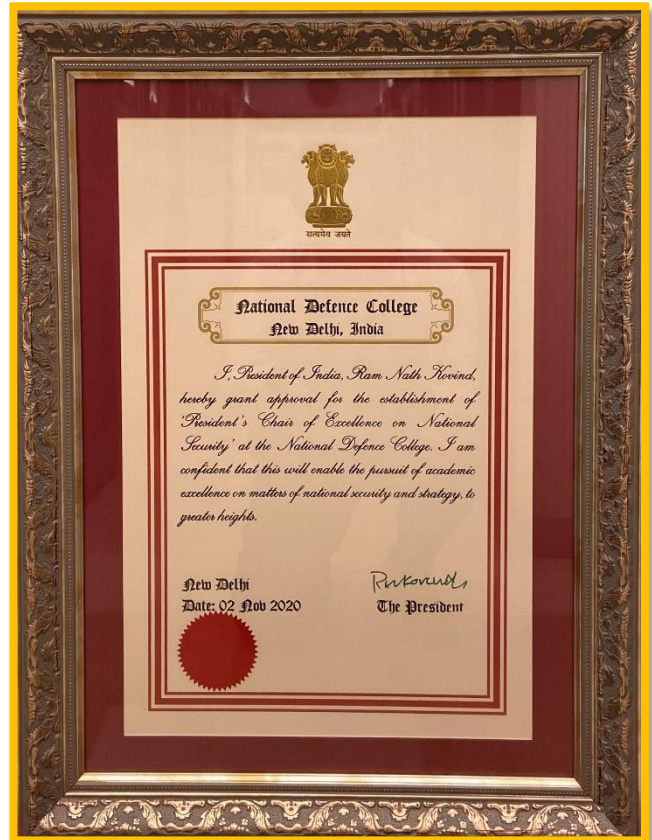




Much like the earlier Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair of Excellence at IDSA, and the DRDO Chair of Excellence, a proposal was initiated for establishing the President's Chair of Excellence on National Security at the NDC.

A case was taken up by the College in the month of October 2020. The President accorded the approval for establishment of the President's Chair of Excellence on National Security at NDC ON 02 Nov 2020.

AVM A Subramaniam AVSM (Retd) has been appointed as President's Chair of Excellence on National Security with effect from 01 Feb 2021.



# Key Projects for Renovation

## Library and IT Facility

The NDC library is the nerve centre for all college studies and plays an important role in promoting the academic life of the institution. It stocks material having relevance to the seven studies conducted at the college and thesis submitted by the course members as part of the syllabus. The library provides a purposeful and significant input to the course members towards achieving their objectives. The library, spread over two floors, has a collection of 27000 volumes, including books, bound periodicals and theses written by course members. The library subscribes to over 120 Indian/Foreign journals/ magazines and 26 daily newspapers. NDC also has a very good digital library, wherein it is possible to access more than 3.5 lac e-Resources through **Refread aggregator**.



Library after Renovation

The library has software called the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). It has a database of all books and all articles of excellence catalogued by title, author and subject and are available on all computers in the library and IAG rooms. In addition, 22 extra workstations have been installed to facilitate officers in their thesis. The library also moved forward from the manual membership cards to a system of digital cards.



Info tech Centre and Private Study Cubicles

The Info-tech Centre and Private Study Cubicles, together provide course members facilities to access the computerised data base on Local Area Network (LAN) with computers meant for use by course members for the IAG work/presentations and individual thesis work.

### **Developing Library Network (DELNET)**

The NDC library is a member of DELNET. The DELNET presently has members from over 1300 libraries, situated both within and outside Delhi providing access to a large number of books and periodicals of all member libraries.



## Online Delivery of Course



Under the dynamic leadership of The Commandant, NDC migrated to an electronic platform for the conduct of courses. A majority of speakers now address the course online from their office or homes, to the 110 participants at their residences and pretty much elsewhere. The syndicate work on

specific topics of team is being conducted online. This experiment came with its own gift hamper, bringing forth NDC's ability to connect to speakers across the globe from US to Australia.

In another first, NDC even started conducting Strategic Gaming Exercises (SGE), Service presentations and Country presentations online. In addition, the Media Capsule was also conducted in a hybrid manner for the first time during the 60<sup>th</sup> Course, with only a few officers, who were appointment holders, visiting NDC.





A unique experiment has been started at NDC, based on suggestions of the course members and taken forward by a very dynamic team of staff led by The Commandant himself, to organise “**Ideas Exchange Programme**” with NDC’s the world over. The United Kingdom presented papers before a mix of viewers from both the colleges of strategic studies, which was followed by a very animated Question-Answer session, flushing out the finer details.



## Kautilya Lecture Hall

The seating capacity of Kautilya Lecture Hall has been augmented from 100 to 144, by converting existing table and chairs into an auditorium like seating with integrated microphones. The existing sound proofing system has been renovated to optimum decibel level. Flooring and joinery work has been redone and installation of new data wall/ audio visual system, Central AC plants and automatic fire fighting provisions have been catered for in the state of the art facility.



Kautilya Lecture Hall : Then





Kautilya Lecture Hall : Now

## Dining Hall

Earlier the dining hall had a seating capacity of 100 persons only. With modification to the existing hall and veranda, the capacity of dining hall has been increased to 140 pers. The flooring, joinery, AC system and electrical fitments have been replaced to more superior speciation. New furniture has been provisioned as per new layout of the dining Hall.



Dinning Hall : Then



Dinning Hall : Now



## Common Areas

The common area to include reception, corridors and hunt lounge also has been refurbished for contemporary look.



Reception Area



Corridor





Hunt Lounge

# Pyara Lal Medal

The late Col Pyara Lal, AVSM had been the GSO-1 of the College for over 12 years, from Jan 1960 to Feb 1972. During this tenure in the formative stages of the National Defence College, he contributed substantially in structuring the academic curriculum of the NDC Course. His contribution in setting up the library, publication section and the research section required for organising various references material for the College Library were significant.

Col Pyara Lal died in 1987 and desired in his will to institute a gold medal at the NDC in his memory. In 1992 a gold medal was instituted in his memory for the best essay written by a course participant.

The Col Pyara Lal Medal for best thesis written during 60<sup>th</sup> NDC Course was awarded to Captain Ian Lynn MA OBE, Royal Navy (United Kingdom).

The thesis topic was **“India’s Maritime Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR) can significantly enhance National Security”**.

## Abstract of Thesis

The security and prosperity of India is tied to the seas, not just as the primary means of connectivity and trade, but also for resources, defence and influence. However, as much as the seas promote stability, commerce, resource acquisition and opportunity, they also play host to malign elements. Accurate, timely and germane maritime information is vital to identify the illicit activity.





The Indian Navy supported by the Indian Coastguard launched the Maritime Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Dec 2018 to facilitate this requirement. This study investigates how India can develop this impressive facility to better exploit available maritime information and thereby enhance national security.

An appraisal of the maritime risks pertaining to India derived from primary and secondary sources reveal the scope of the challenge that India faces. The methodological approach clarifies the level of maritime domain awareness necessary to minimise these risks to an acceptable level. An investigation into India's maritime government stakeholders' access to, and potential contribution of, diverse maritime information highlights options for enhanced exploitation of existing knowledge. An evaluation of extant International Maritime Information Organisations provides comparison against proven operating models.

The study finds that the IFC-IOR is an excellent example of a proactive initiative aiming to meet the maritime information requirement. However, if India is to more effectively counter maritime threats to national security, national authorities and international partners must work closer together. Additionally, government stakeholders' access will only be maximised through implementation of a revised operating model and governance structure.

# Convocation

## The Award of M.Phil Degree to 59<sup>th</sup> Course

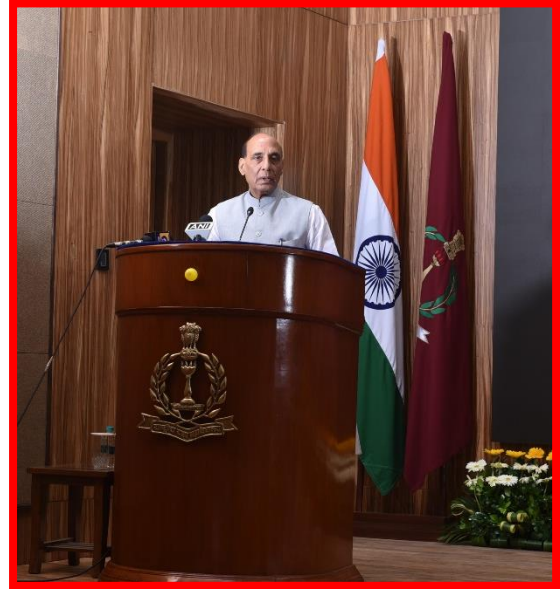
In 1998, the University of Madras accorded NDC the autonomous status as a Research centre for M.Phil degrees. The autonomous pattern as offered to the NDC provides flexibility to NDC to design the course content and curriculum as per its requirement and decide means and methods of assessment in the college. This necessitated submission of a thesis, and its formal presentation before the Doctorial Committee, that would test the soundness of its research and then make recommendations for grant of M.Phil degree. The M.Phil programme commenced with the 46<sup>th</sup> NDC Course in the year 2006. 41 Alumni attended the convocation ceremony for the 59<sup>th</sup> NDC Course held on 25 Sep 2021 and the same was presided over by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh.



## Raksha Mantri's Address

### **Key Highlights of RM's address:**

- *Government's bold approach on border disputes & cross-border terrorism has made India stronger*
- *India is a peace-loving nation, but will give befitting reply to those threatening national security*
- *NDC can play a key role in fostering common understanding & finding solutions to deal with terrorism*
- *Need to focus more on new & fast-emerging areas such as cyber, space & artificial intelligence*



Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh called for proactive synergy among the Armed Forces in future military strategies and responses to safeguard the interests of the nation. The Raksha Mantri said, the bold approach of the Government on issues like border disputes and cross-border terrorism has made India stronger in the recent past and it has now assumed a greater global role & responsibility.

Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated that India is a peace-loving nation, but will give a befitting reply to anyone who threatens its integrity and sovereignty. "Threats to internal and external security will no longer be tolerated. Our actions in Balakot and Galwan are clear signals to all aggressors," he said.

The Raksha Mantri added that today the world is witness to the destabilising effects of terror and the especially dangerous precedence of violent radical forces attempting to gain legitimacy by creating new normal. He said, now there is widespread realisation amongst responsible nations to come together against the menace of terrorism. The NDC, he said, can play a key role in fostering a common understanding among friendly countries against terrorism and finding long-term solutions to deal with the menace.

Sharing his views on the situation in Afghanistan, Shri Rajnath Singh said the developments have highlighted the reality of our times. “The only certainty about evolving geopolitics is its uncertainty. Changes in state boundaries may not be as frequent today. However, the fast-transforming structure of states and the influence that external powers can have on it is clearly evident,” he said. The Raksha Mantri emphasised on the need to draw lessons from the situation in Afghanistan, far beyond the immediate reverberations being felt in the region and beyond.



When these events are viewed, it is tempting to believe that terrorism, fear, medieval thoughts and actions, discrimination drawn on the basis of gender, practices that are seeped in inequality and dogmatic thought, can sweep aside the wishes of the people, plural ideas and inclusive structures.

Nothing can be farther from reality. And human history is a great teacher in this regard. Injustice, however powerful, cannot and will not defeat the collective power of the goodness that is inherent to human existence. This sentiment is evident from an increasing number of world capitals which have lent their voice in favour of liberalism, inclusivity and respect for international norms of governance and behaviour,” said Shri Rajnath Singh.

The Raksha Mantri exhorted NDC to focus more on the new and fast-emerging areas such as cyber, space, artificial intelligence and big data analytics. “The world has witnessed rapid transformation in all these areas of scientific knowledge. This technological progression must be accompanied by its military interpretation within the strategic community,” he said.

Referring to the phrase ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ (the world is one family), the Raksha Mantri stressed on the urgent need to create a unified approach to deal with threats both within the country and globally. He said, be it against terrorism or cyber challenges, success can only come by unifying national diversities. He described the fight against the COVID-19 in recent times as a shining example of unity in diversity and ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’.





Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated the Government's resolve to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in the defence sector, saying that no country that aspires to develop as a knowledge-based economy can sustain such reliance on defence imports.

The Raksha Mantri underscored the importance of knowledge, wisdom and statecraft and said these guiding principles of NDC hold prime importance in the rapidly changing regional scenario. "Knowledge allows us to understand the historical, social, geopolitical and economic realities of a country and a region. Wisdom helps interpret this factual understanding to facilitate far-sighted decision making. And, statecraft brings to bear the understanding of strategic thought and culture to everyday realities. It facilitates decision making in pursuit of long-term interests," he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh lauded NDC for shaping the thoughts of many strategic leaders and practitioners, not only from India but also abroad. He exuded confidence that the graduates of the course would be well equipped to handle all future challenges related to national security. He appreciated the fact that the college has enhanced its infrastructure and rebranded the academic curriculum, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also lauded the institution of President's Chair of Excellence, which has given significant impetus to strategic learning and enhanced academic stature.







**The Abode of Strategic Excellence**

# Commandant NDC

Air Marshal D Choudhury AVSM VM VSM is third generation IAF officer is an alumnus of National Defence Academy and was commissioned on 22 Dec 1983.

The Air Marshal is an alumni of Royal College of Defence Studies UK, a Post Graduate in Strategy and International Security from King's College London and Master of Philosophy on Defence and Strategic Studies.

He is currently undergoing PhD on the subject of Air Power. He has written large number of service papers on operational matters, Air Power and Leadership, many of which have been implemented / published.



The Air Officer is married to Mrs Vyjayanthi Choudhury, a textile designer by profession and a homemaker. She is actively involved in welfare activities of Air Force Wives, social upliftment of women, education of the girl child and the Green Earth movement.