



Continuing their joint Seminar series, *The Delhi Forum for Strategic Studies* (DFFSS) and *The Society for Aerospace Studies* (SAS) organised a seminar on ‘Defending India : Urgent Modernisation Imperatives’ on 3 June 2019, at the India International Centre, New Delhi.

“India is situated in one of the most volatile regions of the world, and faces numerous strategic and security challenges. Whilst major wars may well be only a distant possibility, numerous threats persist and cannot be wished away. In fact, the asymmetrical challenges to India’s security, which are both internal to it and emanate from outside, have created a peculiar dilemma in which the nation finds itself exposed on two-and-a-half fronts, which loom large and real to imperil its safety. Urgent security reforms, including modernisation of India’s defence forces is therefore imperative”.

The above introductory remarks were made by Lt Gen Kamal Davar, former Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency and founder of the DFFSS, a distinguished soldier and strategic thinker and who has continuously made pertinent precise assessments of the military as well as policy

issues. Lt Gen Davar flagged some issues and shared the urgent need for modernisation of the Indian defence forces so as to ensure military readiness to meet conventional and unconventional challenges that are affecting India’s sense of internal security and its safety in the volatile neighbourhood. In so doing, he highlighted the importance of private players to co-develop military infrastructure in the country. India being one of the largest importers of military equipment, Lt Gen Davar also suggested that policy-makers must match their rhetoric with actual steps taken on the ground. Bureaucratic sluggishness and an over-cautious approach need to give way to dynamism and fresh thinking, both crucial in an ever-changing world. Capabilities and operations of India’s defence forces have certainly been impacted by political overtures, but the lack of requisite equipment can potentially put the country in harm’s way, at a time when adversaries are modernising continuously.

Focus at this Seminar was on the status of new fighter aircraft acquisitions, with timelines as priority about which former DCAS Air Marshal Nirdosh Tyagi made his keynote presentation, thereafter followed by industry representatives who flagged the need for establishing catalysts, leading to

meaningful transfer of technologies and thus ‘Making in India’.

Plans and perspectives of Indian Naval Aviation were thereafter articulated by Rear Admiral Davinder Sudan, former ACNS (Air) and lately Senior Directing Staff at the National Defence College. The Indian Army’s modernisation imperatives were the theme of Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia, former Director General of Military Operations and now Director CENJOWS, the Inter



*Air Marshal Nirdosh Tyagi*