

Report

6th Air Commodore Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture

The centre organised the 6th Air Commodore Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture on 18th July. The event is dedicated to paying tribute to its Founder Director, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh. The Session Chair, Dr. Sanjaya Baru, and the Chief Guest, Amitabh Kant, graced the occasion.

Dr. Baru commenced the session by retracing India's remarkable journey as an emerging global power and highlighting the pivotal role played by Air Commodore Jasjit Singh. He recalled the time when former Prime Minister I K Gujral formed a small group to explore reasons for not signing the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), during which Air Commodore Jasjit Singh provided valuable insights from the defence perspective. Accompanied by other experts like K. Subrahmanyam, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, and Sanjaya Baru, they undertook international trips to convey and justify India's nuclear strategy's significance.

For the keynote address, Shri Amitabh Kant was invited. He is India's Sherpa for the G20 Summit, having previously served as the CEO of NITI Aayog. During his speech, Kant paid tribute to the founding director of CAPS, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, highlighting his significant contributions to national security during and after his retirement from the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The speech delved into various aspects of national power, encompassing both military and economic realms. It explored how military power extends beyond traditional assets, encompassing the capabilities of the military-industrial complex to equip armed forces with cutting-edge technology. The pivotal role of aerospace power in both war and peace and its contribution to land and sea warfare was emphasised. Additionally, he highlighted Kautilya's concept of "saam-daam-dand-bhed" as instruments to exercise State power both domestically and externally.

Emphasising that national interest is founded on military and economic power, the speech cited examples from the last decades, demonstrating that military power goes beyond the mere sum of military assets and manpower. The State's military-industrial complex plays an increasingly vital role in supporting the military with the best resources. On the economic front, the country's GDP is a crucial factor determining its economic power. Kant expressed optimism that the upcoming decade would be India's decade, highlighting growth in

manufacturing, increased foreign investment, demographic dividend, and ease of doing business as contributing factors.

Regarding India's energy and water strategy, the speech underscored the need for the country to lead the way in manufacturing without carbonisation and establish itself as a global champion in renewable energy. The favourable climatic conditions and landmass of India were seen as advantageous in achieving this goal. Special attention was given to the potential opportunities in green hydrogen production and export in the renewable energy sector. Additionally, creating a conducive ecosystem for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India was discussed, acknowledging their growth as closely linked to the development of large companies.

During the Q&A session, various topics were addressed, including the benefits of pooling orders to reduce costs in the aviation sector, the potential advantages of a unified national tax system, and India's approach to leveraging air power and domestic production in dealing with China.

In conclusion, the report emphasised that India's growth story lies in strengthening its domestic capabilities, promoting renewable energy, fostering the growth of MSMEs, and pursuing pragmatic solutions in international forums like the G20. India's economic and military growth and sustainable practices were seen as crucial factors shaping its future.