News Analysis (04 May, 2019)

Theatre Command in India

According to report of Pentagon, China continues to rapidly modernise its war-fighting capabilities. In this context, Indian Armed forces lacks on various front for a coordinated approach to tackle China threat.

China frontier is handled by Western Theatre command, which handles entire 4057-km of line of actual control. However, the problem of disjointedness still prevails in Indian army.

In such a scenario, creation of unified theatre command is needed for India.

Andaman and Nicobar Command

- It is the only integrated theatre command in India, formed in 2001 after the Kargil war.
- It is a very small command, with limited resources, and there has been a demand to revert the control of command permanently to the Navy.

What is a Theatre command?

A theatre command is an organisational structure designed to control all military assets in a theatre of war to achieve military effects.

- A joint command is called a 'theatre command' in military parlance (of army, air force and navy).
- It places the resources of all forces at the command of a senior military commander.
- For example a 'theatre command' in the East will integrate components of the IAF and the Army, and also have component of the Navy integrated with it.
- At present, the only joint command is learnt to be in Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Views in favour of Integration

- The integrated **theatre commander will not be answerable to individual Services,**

and will be free to train, equip and exercise his command to make it a cohesive fighting force capable of achieving designated goals.

- The **logistic resources** required to support its operations will also be placed at the disposal of the theatre commander so that it does not have to look for anything when operations are ongoing.
- This is in **contrast to the model of service-specific commands** which India currently has, wherein the Army, Air Force and Navy all have their own commands all over the country. In case of war, each Service Chief is expected to control the operations of his Service through individual commands, while they operate jointly.

Views against Integration

- There has been no occasion, during actual warfare, when the three services have not operated with commendable cooperation.
- Faraway lands war and medium to high intensity wars are a distant possibility.
- With increased communication network , interaction between three organization is easy, they can come on board , can planning without much consideration of spatial distance, so there is no need for new organisation.
- Domain knowledge of the integrated force commander is likely to be limited in respect of the other two Services components under his command, thereby limiting his ability to employ them in the most suitable manner and at the appropriate time

Challenges posed by present structure
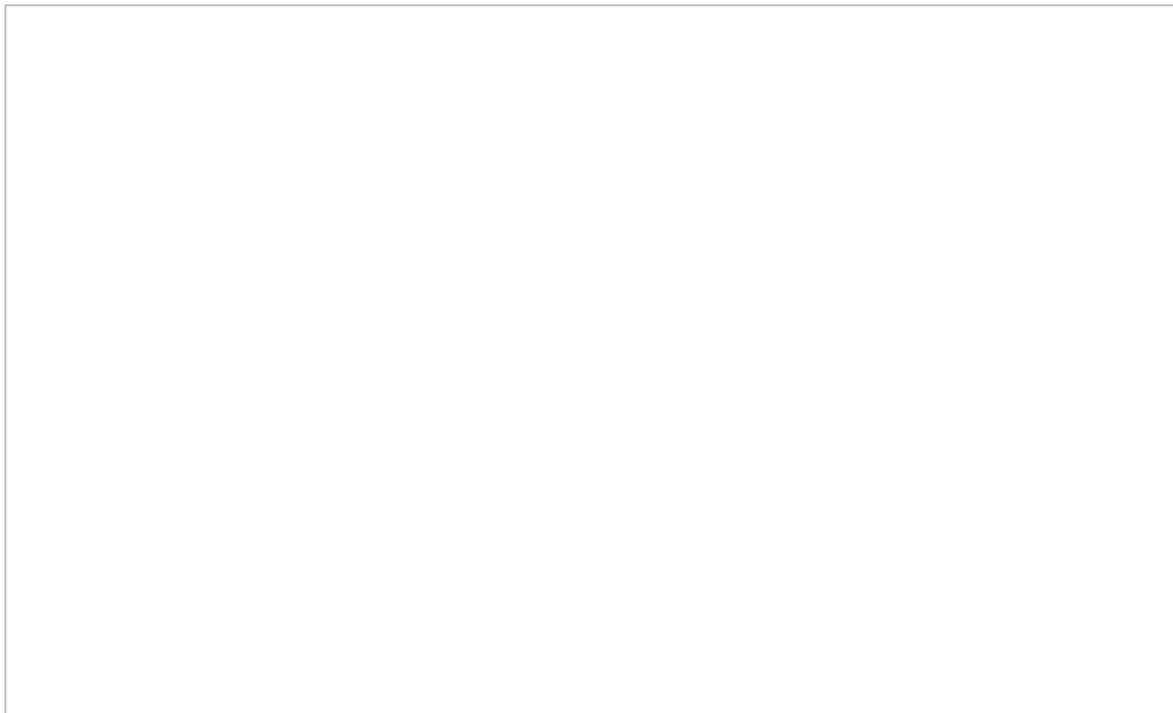
The structural problem with current structure

- None of the present 17 commands is co-located at the same station, nor are their areas of operational responsibility contiguous.
- In addition, there are 2 tri-service commands **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)** and **Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC),** which is headed by rotation by officers from the 3 Services.
- The **SFC (Strategic Forces Command),** looks after the delivery and operational control of the country's nuclear assets. It was created in 2003, but because it has no specific geographic responsibility and a designated role, it is **not an integrated theatre command but an integrated functional command**.
- There has been a demand for **other integrated functional commands, such as the cyber, aerospace and Special Operations commands,** but the government is yet to approve any.

Other problems

Lack of coordination among the three services	- India is perhaps the only major military that does not have a CDS-type post. - This has created problems for the integration of the three services and also on other issues like joint training and planning. - Under the current structure, the three service chiefs are protective of their turfs and perpetuate a single-service approach to training, planning and operations. - The service chiefs are used to almost complete autonomy, leading to unnecessary duplication, wasteful expenditure and a single-service mindset.
Chief of staff committee not very effective	- The COSC as an experiment has not worked very well. It is driven by single-Service requirements and perceptions. - Chairman of COSC lacks executive authority over Services other than his own Service. - The COSC works primarily by consensus and finds it extremely difficult to agree on hard decisions that are binding on all the Services.

Requirement for battle preparedness	• During war, the fate of an entire campaign can hinge on a single decision. • Such a decision can only be made by a specially selected defence chief and not by a committee like the COSC that operates on the principle of the least common denominator. • In the newly emerging scenarios, with threat perceptions ever changing the possibility of an unsymmetrical or lightning strike assault remains high. • It would be outside the capabilities of any single service to respond effectively to such a diverse array of threats. It's in such conditions that the calls for a CDS assume further significance.
Need for unified expert advice from military	• The need for single point military advice for India's civilian political masters cannot be over emphasized. • The political leadership would be in a dilemma if the three service chiefs offer separate opinions regarding a military campaign or another strategy.
Civilian bureaucracy acting as interface	• In the present structure, the military has limited access to the political leadership. • The Defence Secretary and the National Security Adviser act as the interface between the Service Chiefs and the Cabinet Committee of Security or the National Security Council. • However, these two posts are often manned by persons belonging to generalist services like IAS or IFS. • This intermediate link often deprives the government of specific military opinion on important matters. • This also leads to turf battles between the civilian bureaucracy and the forces within the Ministry of Defence.

Opinion of Three Services on This Proposal

ARMY – In favour: It is time to move away from a service specific approach to operations towards a system which avoids duplication, ensures optimum utilisation of available resources.

AIR FORCE – strongly opposed

- It doesn't have enough resources — fighter squadrons, mid-air refuellers and AWACS — to allocate them dedicatedly to different theatre commanders.
- It believes that India is not geographically large enough to be divided into different theatres, as resources from one theatre can easily be moved to another theatre

NAVY-more nuanced, it too is not in favour of implementing the proposal currently

- The current model of control by the Navy Headquarters ideally suited for its strategic role.
- There are also underlying fears about the smaller Services losing their autonomy and importance.

Recommendation by various committees

Kargil Review Committee, Shekatkar Committee have lamented on compartmentalised planning against external and internal threats with some 'jointness' envisaged at the highest levels. According to these committees, this leads to a disjointed and fragmented execution at the operational and lower levels, leading to a lack of synergy within the battle space. To eliminate this, institution and operalization is necessary.

Conclusion

Changing dynamics of national security which, now encompasses cyber, automation and such new challenges, cannot be solved by a disjointed general and MoD labyrinth but rather a clear and robust structure that should quickly respond to emergent situation.

## Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT)

- The Supreme Court, dismissing a writ petition filed by Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecological Societies of India (FOGSI), upheld the constitutional validity of **Section 23** of the **PCPNDT Act, 1994**.
    - **Section 23** of the Act, provides for penalties for anomalies in paperwork/record keeping/clerical errors regarding the provisions of the Act.
- It was aggrieved in the writ petition that Section 23, what they term as **'clerical errors'**, is treated on the same footing as the actual offence of sex determination.
- SC in its judgement opined that:
    - Non-maintenance of records is not merely a technical or procedural lapse in the context of sex determination, it is the most significant piece of evidence for identifying the accused.
    - Any dilution of the provisions of the Act or the rules would only defeat the purpose of the Act to prevent female foeticide, and relegate the right to life of a girl child under **Article 21** of the Constitution, to a mere formality.
    - If a detailed record is not maintained then the violations can never be detected. It will defeat the purpose of the whole act.

Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT) Act

- The act was enacted in 1994 and amended in 2003 and is an important tool for addressing sex-selective eliminations.

- **Objectives:** The main purpose of enacting the act is to ban the use of sex selection techniques before or after conception and prevent the misuse of a prenatal diagnostic technique for sex-selective abortion.

Sri Vedanta Desikan
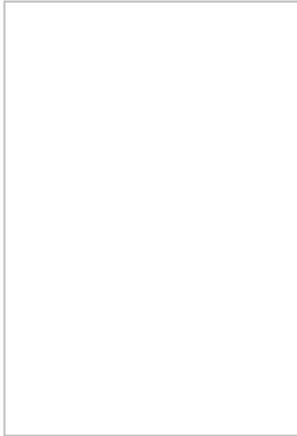
- Vice President released a **postage stamp** to commemorate the **750th birth anniversary** of **Sri Vedanta Desikan**.
- Shri Vedanta Desikan is one of the most prominent preceptors in the **Sri Vaishnava tradition** and one of the most effulgent luminaries of South India.
- He followed the philosophy of Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita.
    - VishishtAdvaita literally means Advaita with uniqueness; qualifications, it is a non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy.
    - It is **non-dualism** of the qualified whole, in which Brahman alone exists, but is characterized by multiplicity. It can be described as qualified monism or qualified non-dualism or attributive monism.
    - It is a school of Vedanta philosophy which belief in all diversity subsuming to an underlying unity.
- He was celebrated as **'sarva-tantra-svatantra'** master of all arts and crafts; awarded the title **'kavi tarkika-kesari'** the lion amongst poets and logicians; and glorified as **'ramanuja-daya-patram'** the recipient of Ramanuja's blessings.
- He had authored brilliant poems, prose, drama, epics, commentaries, scientific texts and philosophical treatises in Sanskrit, Tamil, Prakrit and Manipravalam.
- Much more than a spiritual teacher, he was a multi-faceted personality-- a scientist, a logician, a mathematician, a literary genius, a linguist, a military strategist and much more.
- His philosophy was based on inclusion, where anyone irrespective of caste and creed could join the Sri Vaishnava fold.
- He mastered the Vedas, the Vedangas, the **4000 Divya Prabhanda**(collection of 4,000 Tamil verses) and all the existing schools of Indian philosophy such as **Nyaya,**

Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa, Yoga and Sankhya by the age of twenty.

- He also expressed his genius in the field of arts and sciences through other works such as:
    - **Aahaara Niyamam** that detailed how different food items help in maintaining a healthy mind and a disease-free life.
    - **Subhashita Neevi** contains a fund of moral and ethical advice which is relevant and practical.
    - **Silpartha-saram**-a treatise on sculpture.
    - **Bhugola-nirnayam**-a research text on geography.

Detention of 'Foreigners' in Assam

- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative **(CHRI) has expressed concerns over the apex court's remark** on the detention of 'foreigners' in Assam.

    As per the body, the remark defies India's constitutional and international obligations.
- The concern is in reference to Chief Justice of India's admonition of Assam Chief Secretary for proposing a methodology for the release of a handful of foreign prisoners who have been in detention beyond their term of sentence for illegal entry.
    - The bench referred that **Assam has only 900 detainees despite lakhs of illegal foreigners being identified**. Most of them have already intermingled with the local population.
    - The CJI said that the stand of the Government of India and the State of Assam should be that **foreigner detenues should be deported as soon as possible**.
- CHRI has argued that **detainees languish in jail in inhumane conditions, in violation of their human rights, referring to Article 21 of the Constitution** that says that no person in India can be deprived of her/his right to life and liberty without due process.

    International law lays down that **deportations can take place only with the consent of the country of origin** and India has no such agreement with Bangladesh. Also, Bangladesh has consistently refused to accept that its citizens migrate in large numbers to India.
- Currently, the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** exercise is going on in Assam.

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, **international non-governmental organisation, headquartered in New Delhi,** working for the practical realisation of human rights across the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states.

- It is **one of the world's oldest political associations of states**. Its roots go back to the British Empire when some countries were ruled directly or indirectly by Britain. Some of these countries became self-governing while retaining Britain's monarch as Head of State. They formed the British Commonwealth of Nations.
- **In 1949, the Commonwealth came into being.** Since then, independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth.
- **Membership today is based on free and equal voluntary cooperation.** The last two countries to join the Commonwealth - **Rwanda and Mozambique** - have no historical ties to the British Empire.

Important Facts For Prelims (4th May 2019)

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

- Common Service Centre's **(CSC) e-Governance Services India Limited,** under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has **tied up** with **IIT-Kanpur** to upscale **'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'**.
    - IIT-Kanpur has brought together **15 leading higher education institutions** from Uttar Pradesh to work with CSC for the development of villages under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan scheme.
    - These institutions will **adopt gram panchayats** and equip them with all citizen centric services through CSCs.
- 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan' is an **initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)**. Its **2.0** version was launched in the year **2018**.
    - It aims to create a **vibrant relationship between the society and the higher educational institutions,** with the latter providing the **knowledge and technology support to improve livelihoods in rural areas** and to upgrade the capabilities of both the public and private organizations in the society.
    - It covers two major domains for holistic development of villages – **human development and material (economic) development** - in an integrated way.
    - **Institutes** through their faculty and students **carry out studies of living conditions** in the adopted villages, **assess** the local problems and needs and thus accordingly **prepare a workable action plan**.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR STUDENTS

Advantages

- Teenagers are more informed today, more than ever before.
- Research has never been easier than it is right now.
- A boost in self-esteem.
- Disabilities become alomost invisible.
- Boost to Technological literacy.
- Broaden exposure of opportunities.

Disadvantages

- Social media may be a platform for cyberbullying.
- Isolation in disabled teens.
- Increase in procrastina-tion.
- Social skills are destroyed.
- Information overload.
- Health related issues & negative effect on their productivity.

Common Service Centres (CSCs)

- The CSC is a strategic cornerstone of the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP),** approved by the Government in **May 2006,** as part of its commitment in the **National Common Minimum Programme** to introduce e-governance on a massive scale.
- The objective of CSCs is to provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.
- A highlight of the CSCs is that it offers **web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas,** including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.

Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies

- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser **(PSA)** to the Government of India and the **IIT Delhi** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding **(MoU)** for setting up a **Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies** for implementation of sustainable, scientific and technological solutions for waste management.
- The **long-term goal** is to create **circular economic models for waste management,** by leveraging **big data analytics** and **frontier technologies** to streamline waste in India.
- The overall outcomes would involve treating waste and generating different forms of energy, thereby **making India a waste free nation, with zero greenhouse gas emission** and no health hazard.

Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India

- India has had a Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) since 1999. **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was the first PSA from 1999-2001** and Dr. R. Chidambaram from 2001-2018. Professor K. Vijay Raghavan succeeded Dr. Chidambaram on 3rd April 2018.
- The Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) is an overarching Council that facilitates the PSA's Office to assess the status in specific science and technology domains, comprehend challenges in hand, formulate specific interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap and advise the Prime Minister accordingly.