



Integration Among Defence Forces

For Prelims: Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), Artificial Intelligence (AI), GSAT-7B, ISRO, Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), LCA-Mk1A,

For Mains: Benefits of rationalisation of Indian defense forces on overall internal security and external threats to the country.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [Chief of Defence Staff \(CDS\)](#) highlighted that **nine verticals have been identified for integration among three defense services** which includes logistics, intelligence, information flow, training, administration, supply chain management and maintenance etc. among others.

- The process of **'theatrisation'**, part of a reorganization effort undertaken by the armed forces, which will be fulfilled through integration of the defense forces and the creation of [Integrated Theatre Commands](#).

What is the Integration Among Three Defense Services ?

- Integration of three defense services in India involves establishment of **Integrated Theatre Commands (ITCs), office of the Chief of Defense Staff, Cyber and Space Commands, and resource sharing and joint training and exercises** among others.
- **Integrated Theatre Command:**
 - An integrated theatre command envisages a **unified command of the three Services, under a single commander**, for geographical theatres (areas) that are of strategic and security concern.
 - The commander of such a force will be able to bear all resources at his disposal — from the Army, the Indian Air Force, and the Navy — with **seamless efficacy**.
 - The integrated theatre commander **will not be answerable to individual Services**.
 - Integration and jointness of the three forces will avoid duplication of resources. The resources available under each service will be available to other services too.
 - The services will get to know one another better, **strengthening cohesion** in the defense establishment.
 - The [Shekatkar committee](#) has recommended the **creation of 3 integrated theatre commands — northern** for the China border, western for the Pakistan border, and southern for the maritime role.
- **Joint Command in Andaman & Nicobar islands:**
 - There is one [joint command in Andaman and Nicobar Islands](#).
 - It is the **first Tri-Service theatre command** of the Indian Armed Forces, based at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India.
 - It was **created in 2001 to safeguard India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca** by increasing the rapid deployment of military

assets in the islands.

- The other tri-service command, the **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)**, looks after the delivery and operational control of the country's nuclear assets.
- **Current Situation:**
 - The Indian armed forces **currently have 17 commands**. There are 7 commands each of the Army and the Air Force. The Navy has 3 commands.
 - Each command is headed by a **3-star rank military officer**.

Theaterisation of Armed Forces



What is Theaterisation?

It is a concept that **seeks to integrate the capabilities of the three services** – army, air force and navy – and **optimally utilise their resources** for wars and operations.

There will be **specific theatre commands – or units – could be geographical** – like looking at a border with a particular country – **or thematic**, like a command for all maritime threats.

The **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** has been given task of establishment of joint/ theatre commands.

Several nations have theatre commands, **including the US and China**.



What are the Advantages?

- Synergy among all branches of Indian Armed Forces
- Cohesive and Compact Fighting Force
- Utilising the Logistics of all three Services
- Improved Troop Acclimatisation
- Theatre-Specific Resource Optimization
- Speedy Mobilisation and Intel Sharing



What are the Challenges?

- Budgetary Allocations and the Distribution of Finances
- Assets becoming dispersed by multiplication of theatre commands
- Nomenclature and Jurisdiction of Commands
- Leadership of Theatre commands
- Dilution of powers of Armed Services Chiefs

What is the Current Command Structure?

17 single-service commands

- ▶ Army- 7
- ▶ Navy- 3
- ▶ Air Force- 7

Two tri-Service Commands [Strategic Forces Command] and the Andaman and Nicobar Command

Shekatkar Committee Recommendation (2015)

Creation of 3 integrated theatre commands

- ▶ Northern - China border
- ▶ Western - Pakistan border
- ▶ Southern- Maritime Security



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What are the Recent Developments in Integration Among the Three Services?

- The appointment of the **CDS** and the creation of the **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** are momentous steps towards the integration and advancement of defence forces.
 - Work exclusively pertaining to military matters will fall within the purview of the DMA. Earlier, these functions were the mandate of the Department of Defence (DoD).
- **CDS:** It is the single-point military adviser to the government as suggested by the **Kargil Review Committee in 1999**.

- It oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services.
- **As the head of DMA, CDS** is vested with the authority in prioritizing inter-service procurement decisions.
- **Significance of CDS:**
 - **Synergy between Armed forces and Government:** CDS fosters better cooperation between the Ministry of Defense bureaucracy and the Armed services.
 - **Jointness in operations:** Erstwhile Chiefs of Staff Committee-COSC has been made dysfunctional as CDS promotes more jointness in operations.
- **Concerns of Indian Air Force (IAF):**
 - While the army and navy are in favour of theatre commands, the IAF has concerns about the model **over the division of its air assets, the nomenclature of commands, the leadership of theatre commands and dilution of powers of chiefs.**
- **New Uniforms:**
 - All officers of the rank of Brigadier, Maj General, Lt General, and General will wear berets of the same colour, common badges of rank, a common belt buckle, and a common pattern of shoes, and will do away with the lanyards on the shoulders.
- Recently, [**Inter-Services Organisations \(Command, Control and Discipline\) Bill, 2023**](#), was introduced in Lok Sabha to empower designated military commanders to take charge of soldiers and enforce discipline, regardless of the service they belong to.

Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023

- The system is likely to include **five joint services commands - western, eastern, northern, maritime, and air defense.**
- The central government may constitute an Inter-services Organisation, which may include a Joint Services Command.
- It will empower the Commander-in-Chief/the Officer-in-command of Inter-Services Organisations to maintain discipline and ensure proper discharge of duties of all the personnel from the army, navy and IAF serving under his command.
- The Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command of an Inter-services Organisation shall be the head of such Inter-services Organisation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Department of Border Management is a Department of which one of the following Union Ministries? (2008)

- (a) Ministry of Defence
- (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
- (c) Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
- (d) Ministry of Environment and Forests

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q1: Analyze the multidimensional challenges posed by external state and non-state actors, to the internal security of India. Also discuss measures required to be taken to combat these threats. **(2021)**

Q2: Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. **(2020)**

Q3: Border management is a complex task due to difficult terrain and hostile relations with some countries. Elucidate the challenges and strategies for effective border management. **(2016)**

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