

'Joint Theatre Command' of Tri-Services

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In news– Addressing the 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' event in Jammu, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced the **setting up of 'Joint Theatre Commands' of the tri-services to bolster coordination among the defence forces.**

'Joint Theatre Commands' of the tri-services-

- The idea behind 'Theatre Command System' is to **bring synergistic coordination between the three branches of the armed forces.**
- Further, **it aims at bringing separate commands for the army, navy, air force under a unified command** spearheaded by a single commander.
- The integration process would ultimately lead towards the unified military assets fused into one single command under one operational head who will be responsible for directing and controlling their activities in a given situation.
- Besides the operational synergies, the **theatre command system will also contribute to more streamlined costs and a leaner fighting force.**
- Further, the theatre command system aims to **bring greater focus in the allocation of resources and help reduce redundancies.**
- **At present, there are two joint services commands in India,**
 - The first one is Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC).
 - The second, being Strategic Forces Command (SFC).
- Based on the principle of theatre command system, **ANC is considered to be the only one of its kind in the country** that amalgamates the army, navy and air force as **SFC**

takes care of the nuclear assets of India and is not related to any specific theatre of war.

- **Set up in 2001, ANC is based in Port Blair and is led by officers of the three services** on a rotation basis. The command covers India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Malacca Strait.

Hurdles to Theatre Command System-

- The integration of three forces under the Theatre Command System would require an intricate chain of command flow.
- It comprises **hurdles related to operational command and control over assets.**
- Besides, **budgetary allocations, fund distribution and assets** between the army, navy and air force need to be clearly worked out to enable the setting up of a seamless theatre command.
- **The three basic components of Indian defence forces are the army, navy and air force, each with its unique fighting profile,** separate heads and multiple commands that are vertically split in terms of their command structure.
- **The Indian Army and Indian Air Force have seven commands each** while the **Indian Navy has three commands.** These commands are scattered across the nation and don't coincide geographically.
- **Under the proposed four theatre commands:** air defence, maritime, integrated eastern and integrated western theatre commands, **will promote 'jointness' among the three branches of the armed forces.**
- It will ensure increased coordination to boost the overall fighting capabilities of the Indian armed forces, create capacities to adapt to the requirements of hybrid warfare along with seamless command centres to meet future challenges.

Other countries with Theatre Command System-

- The **USA was the first country to enforce a theatre command system** with six geographical and four functional commands presently in place.
- **Russia** also started with the restructuring of its defence forces in 2008 and has four theatre commands.
- **China's** theatre command system is said to be based on the US model and has "five peacetime geographical commands".
- Chinese Western Theatre Command covers the region along the Indian border.