

# Three New Joint Military Doctrines: Defence

## NEWS: IAF chief proposes joint planning, coordination centre in Delhi

India is advancing its military integration by releasing three new joint doctrines for special forces, airborne, and multi-domain operations. These doctrines are a foundational step towards creating integrated theatre commands, a major defense reform to unify the Army, Navy, and Air Force under single operational commanders.

## A Leap Towards Military Integration

The Indian Armed Forces are undertaking a significant transformation towards greater jointness, integration, and theaterisation. A major step in this direction was the recent clearance of three new Joint Doctrines by the Ministry of Defence. This announcement was made at the 'Ran Samvad' 2025 seminar, held at the Army War College in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh.

## Joint Doctrine for Special Forces Operations

### Unified Framework

This doctrine brings India's elite special forces—the Army's Para (SF), the Navy's MARCOS, and the IAF's Garuds—under a single, unified operational framework.

### Core Aims

It seeks to establish a common operational understanding, shared terminology, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all special forces units.

### Focus Areas

Conducting joint training to reduce duplication of effort and enhance synergy. Defining future weapon profiles to ensure interoperability of equipment. Establishing unified Command & Control structures that operate seamlessly across land, maritime, and air domains.

## Joint Doctrine for Airborne and Heliborne Operations

### Core Aim

To achieve seamless coordination and execution of para-drop and heli-lift missions involving elements from all three services.

### Standardisation

It standardises the planning and execution procedures for such operations across the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

### Emphasis

The doctrine places a strong emphasis on integrating advanced air mobility assets (like heavy-lift helicopters and transport aircraft) with Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to provide real-time intelligence during missions.

## Joint Doctrine for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)

### Core Aim

This forward-looking doctrine stresses the seamless integration of military power across all five domains of warfare: land, sea, air, space, and cyber.

### Strategic Goal

It is designed to effectively counter adversaries who operate below the conventional thresholds of armed conflict, often using hybrid warfare tactics.

### Requirements

The doctrine calls for the adoption of advanced technologies, the creation of innovative organisational structures, and the execution of fully networked joint operations.

## Understanding Integrated Theatre Commands

An Integrated Theatre Command is a unified military structure where the resources of all three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) are placed under a single commander who is responsible for a specific geographical theatre of operations.

### **Commander's Authority**

The theatre commander will have the operational freedom to train and equip their command according to the specific threats and objectives of their theatre. They will also have direct control over the logistics of all the services within their command.

### **Service Identity**

It is important to note that the three services will retain their independent identities and service-specific roles even within a theatre command structure.

### **Shekatkar Committee Recommendations**

A committee headed by Lieutenant General D B Shekatkar had recommended the creation of three theatre commands

1. Northern Command: To address threats from China.
2. Western Command: To counter challenges from Pakistan.
3. Southern Command: To safeguard India's maritime interests.

## **Current Command Structure**

### **Separate Commands**

India currently has 17 separate service-specific commands (7 for the Army, 7 for the Air Force, and 3 for the Navy), which often operate in silos.

### **Existing Unified Commands**

There are two tri-service unified commands already in existence:

1. Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC).
2. Strategic Forces Command (SFC), which is responsible for managing the country's nuclear assets.

## **The Role of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**

The post of the CDS is central to the entire theaterisation and jointness effort.

### **Position**

The CDS serves as the Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC).

### **Advisory Role**

The CDS is the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister on all tri-service matters, providing a single point of military advice.

### **Key Responsibilities**

1. Driving the process of jointness and theaterisation.
2. Integrating the capability development and procurement processes of the three services to avoid duplication and optimize resources.
3. Ensuring seamless coordination between the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the civilian leadership in the Ministry of Defence.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iaf-chief-proposes-joint-planning-coordination-centre-in-delhi/article69980913.ece>