

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Joint theatre commands should not compromise IAF's doctrines: Air Chief Marshal

TNN | Oct 4, 2022, 09:15 PM IST



NEW DELHI: The IAF is not against integration and creation of tri-service theatre commands but their proposed structures should not compromise doctrinal aspects of the force, Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari said on Tuesday.

“Air power has the unique capability of undertaking independent strategic operations as well as operations coordinated with sister services and other arms of the national security apparatus,” the IAF chief said.

“No single service can win wars on its own. We understand the imperativeness of joint planning and execution in future wars and are keen on integrating the efforts of the three services...But we have certain reservations about the proposed structures,” he added.

**Congratulations!**

You have successfully cast your vote

Login to view result

With General Anil Chauhan taking over as the new chief of defence staff last Friday, the creation of the proposed integrated maritime theatre command (MTC), air defence command (ADC), and two land-based commands for Pakistan and China is now expected to gather pace.

IAF contends it would be operationally unwise to divide its “limited air assets” like just 30-31 existing fighter squadrons when

42 are sanctioned, six mid-air refuelling aircraft, three AWACS and two AEW&C aircraft among the different theatre commands. Moreover, IAF can swiftly move its forces from one front to another across the country in less than 48 hours.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

[EXPLORE BRIEFS >](#)

**33 financial fugitives from India are still hiding abroad: Govt data**



**Bengal saved India today: Mamata Banerjee on landslide victory**

ACM Chaudhari said the model of integration to be adopted must be future-ready, capitalize on the strengths of the Army, Navy and IAF and reduce levels of decision-making instead of adding more. "We need an organisational structure that is best suited for Indian conditions and our geopolitical imperatives," he said.

Noting that his force has recently revised and updated its doctrine, he said, “The doctrinal aspects of the IAF should not be compromised in any way by the new structures.”

The IAF believes a stand-alone or separate ADC could prove “counter-productive” in the wars of the future. “Air defence and offensive air missions are interdependent and if executed in isolation, these would not only be disjointed but also ineffective in design or execution of the joint strategy,” the IAF chief had said earlier.

Modern 4.5 or 5th-generation fighter jets like the newly-inducted Rafales have “omni-role capability” ranging from offensive to air defence operations, and restricting them to any one role would lead to their under-utilisation, the IAF says.

India currently has only two unified commands, the Andaman and Nicobar Command and the Strategic Forces Command to handle the country's nuclear arsenal, which were set up in 2001 and 2003 after the Kargil conflict with Pakistan.

In contrast, there are as many as 17 single-service commands (Army 7, IAF 7 and Navy 3), which have little jointness in planning and operations as well as command-and-control structures.