

Exercise held to fine-tune integrated theatre commands

All scenarios, including a collusive threat of a two-front war from China and Pakistan, played out, says Defence official

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As part of the process of evolving a consensus among the three services on the re-organisation of the forces into integrated tri-service theatre commands and fine-tune the model, a table-top war-gaming exercise was held on July 22 for the first time, in which all scenarios, including a collusive threat of a two-front war from China and Pakistan, were war-gamed, according to a Defence official.

“At the meeting held on July 22, for the first time ever, a table-top exercise was war-gamed with operational settings, which was played across all theatres simultaneously, multi-domain and cross theatre. This was large in extent from the Northern Command to the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and catered to the collusive threat we expect from two of our neighbours,” the official said.

This was played for a full day and was attended by

around 40 officers, including the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Bipin Rawat, three Service Chiefs, Vice-Chiefs and Director-General of Military Operations equivalent from the three services.

‘Frank exchange’

There was a frank and free-wheeling exchange to evolve the best process on theatrisation and many of the concerns put forward by various sides over the creation of the commands were addressed,

including that of the Air Force, the official said.

Explaining the consultations, the official said when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was briefed in June, he had advised two things – to form a consultative committee to address the concerns of the stakeholders outside the services and hold consultations to resolve service issues one more time.

The committee headed by the CDS, with the three Vice-Chiefs and representatives from other Ministries con-

cerned, had met and resolved most of the issues related to the functions, rotational nature of all commanders, need for a unified maritime structure, including the Coast Guard, and having the paramilitary in border commands, the official said. Broad consensus emerged on the need to take forward the theatrisation process expeditiously and the Air Force, too, is on board, the official said. “Various views were heard and would be taken on board. It

was made aware that sufficient time would be given for the structures to be formed, reviewed and stabilised.”

“The creation of integrated theatre commands West, East, Maritime Theatre Command [MTC] and Integrated Air Defence Command are accordingly being progressed,” officials said. As stated by Gen. Rawat earlier, the Northern Command would be left out of the ambit of the process for now and integrated at a later stage.